

THE
Curse of Ulrica;
OR THE
WHITE CROSS KNIGHTS
OF
RIDDARHOLMEN.

A
SWEDISH ROMANCE
OF THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Chi va lontan dalla sua patria, vede
Cose, da quel, che già credea, lontane :
Che narrandole poi, non se gli crede,
E stimato bugiardo ne rimane ;
Che'l voigo sciocco non gli vuol dar fede,
Se non l'e v. de, e tocca chiare, e piane.
Per questo io so, che l'inesperienza
Farà al mio canto dar poca credenza.
Ariosto, Orli. Fur.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE
CURSE OF ULRICA,

&c. &c. &c.

CHAP. XII.



They do not sleep :
....., a grisly band,
I see them sit ; they linger yet,
Avengers of their native land ;
..... In dreadful harmony they join,
And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line
GRAY.

*(The guard room of the cavern. Adol-
phus is in the attitude of silence.)*

*First Guard. (Rubbing his hands to-
gether) Ha ! it is very cold !*

*Second Guard. I wish this night was
over.*

*First Guard. Otter delays so long—
an half hour is already gone by.*

Second Guard. Yes, at the least : but Otter is your man for a quick message.

First Guard. Hark ! listen to the storm !

Third Guard. It is a dark tempestuous night !

Fourth Guard. I have the longest way home of you all. I envy those who have snug births in the castle.

Second Guard. But the devil's in't if your horse won't fly with you home.

Fourth Guard. Ay ! it is good to ride like the wind when neither way nor track is seen !—but my horse is fleet.

Fifth Guard. I would wager the speed of Balder against him. But what signifies his speed compared with the evil Nornies : * s'blood ! my heart turns ice when I hear their cry pursuing me on the heath !

ADOLPHUS

* Vide Note at the end of the volume.

ADOLPHUS. (*In a loud tone*) Have mercy! Oh God! have mercy upon me!

First Guard. (*Softly*) Hush! he prays!

Second Guard. And every one of you here has a wife at home, who receives you when you knock at the door, and warms you in her arms, and chases away the isicles with kisses, when you lie frozen on her bosom.

Third Guard. And why do not you also, Ulf-sax, look out among the daughters of the land, which has supplied so many warm breasts, so many soft arms? Haste thee, I shall help you to a wedding! ha! ha! ha!

Fourth Guard. A bumper to Ulf-sax's bride!

All cry out together. Bravo! bravo, the bride! (*They drink*)

(*A knock at the door.*)

First Guard. Here comes Otter at last.

ADOLPHUS. My God ! do not desert me in this hour of trial !

It was Otter who entered, bearing in his hand the warrant for the immediate execution of Adolphus.

The guards took up their arms. Adolphus was placed in the centre. Three of them preceded him with pine torches. Otter led the way down the vaulted passage. They opened before him a little door. Pale and haggard, Adolphus staggered after them. They let him down through a small trap-door : the guards followed, silent as death. Sadly their footsteps sounded through the vault ; and more sadly the melancholy echoes which replied to them. They descended twenty steps ; a key turned in a lock ; an iron door opened ; they came now into a little cell, small, close, and dark :
there

there stood in it two strangers, whose figures and countenances were concealed by the folds of their large cloaks. The plumage of their military head-dress shaded the expression of their eyes. Another stranger stood with an axe in his hand; he held a white unfolded cloth, which he now gave to one of the guards, that with it they might bind the eyes of Adolphus.

“ No,” said Adolphus, “ I am a soldier; I have so often beheld death, to me he is not terrible.”

He looked round him once more—piety and resignation were painted in his countenance as the red gleam of their torches fell on it! “ Bear witness,” exclaimed he, “ to my last words: I am about to suffer for an unknown crime. I am ignorant of what they lay to my charge—I am innocent—but bear ye witness, I freely forgive my enemies, and I

“ pray that my blood may not come
 “ upon them.”

“ Nor upon us,” cried out the
 guards, deeply affected.

“ No, not upon you,” replied Adol-
 phus.

“ Certainly, certainly,” cried the
 guards, “ this man dies the death of
 the just !”

“ Who dares to murmur ?” cried
 Otter furiously.

The guards remained silent. Adol-
 phus now bared his neck and bosom :
 he prepared for the fatal stroke. The
 guards knelt down, took off their hel-
 mets, and prayed in silence. The ex-
 ecutioner stood with uplifted axe, with
 his eye fixed on the two strangers : he
 awaited the dread signal. One of
 them was now observed to tremble
 with great emotion. He approached
 nearer to Adolphus, and whispered in
 his ear—“ a moment, and your soul
 “ passes

“ passes into eternity. With life thou
 “ hast no longer a concern—tell me,
 “ thou that standest on the edge of
 “ the grave, where hast thou conceal-
 “ ed Edda?”

Adolphus now knew it was the
 voice of Wildebrand, and he replied,
 “ Why troublest thou me, Wildebrand,
 “ in this solemn hour? I have for-
 “ given all my enemies....why do you
 “ awake my soul to hatred? I would
 “ pray and make my peace with hea-
 “ ven.”

The strange White Cross Knight,
 who stood in the back part of the cell,
 now approached Adolphus: “It is
 “ fitting,” said he, “ that the con-
 “ demned should pray according to his
 “ own forms, without interruption.
 “ Although the laws of our brother-
 “ hood do not permit us to allow him
 “ a confessor, yet he may die a Ca-
 “ tholic

"Catholic without the presence of a priest."

"A Catholic! . . . a Priest!" . . . exclaimed Adolphus in scorn—"I die a Lutheran—bear ye all witness—I die a Lutheran!"

"This must be deferred," cried the stranger, who appeared now to take part with Adolphus.

"The orders of the council must be obeyed," cried Otter and Wildebrand, speaking together.

"The orders," cried the stranger, "cannot be obeyed without me, and they *shall not* until I make a report of this unforeseen circumstance to the council. It is Adolphus of Mörner the *Catholic* who is condemned, and not Adolphus the *Lutheran*."

"I denounce you," cried Wildebrand, addressing the White Cross Knight, "as a traitor; and you,"
cried

cried he, turning to the guards, "I
" command to take him into custody.
" And now let this man be executed
" in obedience to the orders of your
" chief."

The guards now rose from the floor
of the vault where they had been
kneeling, and a wild murmur ran
through them.

" Touch but a hair of his head,"
cried the strange knight, addressing
the guards, " then tremble and ex-
" pect the vengeance of your chief,
" Tigerhielm. For me, I deliver my-
" self up to you as a prisoner. Let
" this man be remanded; then con-
" duct me to the council—I am pre-
" pared to defend what I now pro-
" pose."

A murmur now arose in favour of
Adolphus, and the guards cried out
with one voice, " reprieve him! re-
" prieve him!"

Wildebrand, almost convulsed with rage, desired them to obey his orders. Otter approached them and succeeded in pacifying them. Wildebrand, who had deceived the council in representing Adolphus as a Catholic, (which the unexpected declaration of Adolphus himself added strength to when he described himself as the son of a Catholic partizan) now exulted in the triumph which his superior authority had given him over that White Cross Knight who had endeavoured to save the life of the unfortunate captive. The guards were reduced to obedience—the victim once more bowed his head to the fatal stroke—the headsman lifted the axe—the signal.

But before the fatal signal was given, a White Cross Knight rushed into the narrow cell. His countenance told a dreadful tale—his feelings seemed too mighty for utterance—he cried aloud

aloud, “ *the fire damp!—the fire damp!* ”
“ —the mine is on fire ! ! ”

At that dreadful sound universal consternation prevailed—a sudden and a dreadful death menaced them all. But Adolphus looked round upon the strange knight—he knew the voice—it was Conrad’s ! He saw him but for a moment, for the lights were extinguished to prevent the danger of the fire-damp exploding. The fear of death, the desire of self-preservation, animated them all. They rushed towards the open air, where alone they might find safety ; and even Wildebrand, in that moment forgetting his prisoner, his love, and his revenge, was the foremost in endeavouring to escape by the shortest passage.

To Adolphus it appeared a dream—in one short moment to be so near eternity—the axe uplifted—awaiting the fatal signal, and now his executioners

tioners flying for their lives, and his miraculously saved. He pondered for a moment on his extraordinary situation — that terrible scourge of those who minister to the passions of mankind, and who are obliged to dwell in the bowels of the earth, was not entirely unknown to him — fired sometimes by the slightest flash of light, and floating in clouds of destruction over the heads of its victims. The fire-damp was as sudden and as terrible as lightning in its effects ; life was instantaneously extinguished by its explosion, and after each shock the deadly vapour pursued its course until it was again kindled, and again blasted all in its path.

Adolphus felt round the walls of his narrow cell ; he found he was alone. He reached the door, which stood open, and stole quietly up the steps. He raised the trap-door cautiously, but even

even in the farthest passage he could discern no light. He advanced along this passage, feeling his way at every step. A hand now seized his, and locked it in its grasp. Adolphus started back, and would have struggled with the stranger. "You cannot escape me—your neck is uncovered, your bosom is bare. You are he that was condemned,"

"I have heard that voice before," exclaimed Adolphus joyfully, "in the forest of Bohemia!"

"It is the Count!" exclaimed Conrad, "and I have succeeded! I beheld you in the guard-room, and made a vow to deliver you or die. 'Twas I raised that imaginary fire-damp, which is here the subject of so much dread. It has succeeded beyond my expectation. I have waited here until they all passed me. You have not a moment to lose, if

"we

“ we would escape from this den ; for
 “ when they discover the deceit I
 “ have put upon them, I can expect
 “ no mercy.”

Conrad now grasped Adolphus by the hand and guided him through the intricate ways of this place, with which he was well acquainted. All was dark and silent in the passage of the prison, for every lamp had been extinguished when the alarm of the fire-damp had been spread. Conrad whispered to Adolphus that it was necessary that he should advance for a few paces to observe whether the sentinel was at his post in the adjoining passage, and to take the opportunity of passing the end of it when his back was towards them.

After a few minutes his hand was grasped again, and he was led forward in silence.

“ Speak,” cried Adolphus, “ are
 “ we past the sentinel—is there any
 “ further

“ further obstacle to our escape, Conrad ?”

“ Yes !” was uttered softly.

“ I do not hear thee, Conrad,” said Adolphus; “ you may now raise your voice ; and do not press my hand so hard.”

Conrad, as Adolphus thought, thrust open a door in the passage, but to his utter dismay he was thrown with force on the floor of the cell, which he recognized as his former dungeon, by the wretch who had betrayed his hopes, and whom he now discovered to be the brutal and ferocious Otter !

“ Thou wilt escape now, I warrant,” cried Otter insultingly, “ and Conrad too ; but his life shall pay for his treason. And thou, enjoy the few moments which are left to you, for they will be your last.”

Otter then fastened the door of his dungeon, and left Adolphus to his reflections.

reflections. It now appeared to Adolphus but too certain, that this demon must have overheard Conrad and himself discoursing in the passage. He seized the opportunity which Conrad's momentary absence offered him, and to stratagem he was indebted for the success which force might not have given him. For Adolphus, with Conrad's assistance (the alarm having dispersed the guards,) would certainly have overpowered him. The appearance of Conrad in such a place seemed to him very extraordinary; and he found it impossible to give to this mystery any satisfactory solution. He feared that the threats of Otter might be too soon realized; and while he grieved for the fate of Conrad he prepared for his own. He waited with trembling expectation in this perilous hour—every distant echo—every sigh of the wind, breathing through the subterranean

subterranean ruins of the cloister-prison, sounded in his ears like the cry of his enemies ;—he bent himself to the earth, and listened to the various noises of the night ;—his ear drank in every sound ;—the mine below extended to an immense width on every side and touched the very foundations of the cloister-prisons : it magnified every sound in a very awful manner. The shutting of distant doors shook the place like peals of thunder. The voices of the guards, who were now inebriated, singing the wild chorus of some warlike ballad, were sometimes heard in the pauses of the storm. The hollow echoes of the mine replied to them, like the deep toned aspirations of more than mortal sounds. The regular tread of the distant sentinel shook Adolphus with alarm, for he imagined every moment that he heard footsteps approaching his dungeon.

Exhausted.

Exhausted and worn out with his fears, after watching anxiously for an hour he stretched himself on the floor of his loathsome cell. One deep-toned stroke proclaimed the hour after midnight. Adolphus started: it was the hour of appointment with his unknown correspondent, whom his fears had totally banished from his mind until this moment. With a rapid glance of his mind he fixed on the stranger, who had wished to defer his execution, as the author of the mysterious billets, or perhaps Conrad, who had the means of saving him. He now heard an approaching step in the passage; it was light and measured, like one who treads in fear. The bolts of his dungeon were withdrawn slowly and cautiously. Adolphus raised himself up on his bed of straw and fixed on the door an eye of anxious expectation. The door opened and in darted a female.

male. Adolphus was struck dumb with astonishment when he beheld Christina. She started like one who recoils from a loathsome reptile.

“Wretched man!” she exclaimed, “you are not he whom I seek.”

“Christina, save me, Christina!” cried Adolphus mournfully.

“Heavens! the Count,” she replied, “and condemned to suffer death!”

“Perhaps within an hour!” said Adolphus.

“You must be saved!” she replied; then, after a moment’s reflexion, she said, “I will save you. Hush!” she continued, “I hear an approaching footstep: we are lost.”

Christina retreated behind the door; Adolphus threw himself instantly on his straw, and feigned to be asleep. The sentinel who guarded the adjoining passage now appeared at the door.

door of the dungeon. Adolphus visibly trembled in every joint; while Christina was ready to faint.

“Ha! ha!” said the sentinel, “I thought I saw a light streaming down the passage; but I am fortunate, for the bird is not flown. I warrant he dreams of death. How he pants! poor devil! Confusion to their forgetfulness; why did they not take care to fasten his door? Marry, ~~rupeit~~ was near paying for their negligence.”

On saying this Rupert drew the door after him, closed the bolts, and marched off to his post. Christina clasped her hands wildly together; “merciful heavens,” she exclaimed, “we are undone! My powers extend not to the sentinels; and thy foe Wilbrand now commands in the mine. If they give the alarm, we are lost past redemption. I came
“hither

“ hither with the intention of giving
“ liberty to my brother, who is now
“ recovered from his wounds; he has
“ been imprisoned some time in one
“ of these dungeons; fortunately as
“ it appeared for you, I have by some
“ mischance, mistaken the particular
“ dungeon, in which they have con-
“ fined him. From a long and inti-
“ mate acquaintance with this place,
“ I am in possession of the secret pas-
“ sages which wind through the bound-
“ aries of this dread cavern. I have
“ here a master key which would have
“ overcome all the obstacles to our es-
“ cape. Our way lies in quite an
“ opposite direction from where the
“ wary Rupert stands. If we had in-
“ stantly quitted the dungeon, we
“ might easily have avoided his ob-
“ servation; and it would have been
“ impossible for him to have followed
“ us. But now,” said she, casting a
look .

look of horror towards the door, "all
" is lost indeed! For this I was not
" prepared.

" Have you no hopes, then?" demanded Adolphus, sighing.

" Alas! none," she replied; " they
" will find us here together when they
" visit your cell to-morrow. I have
" no fears for myself; but my assistance
" will then become of no avail.
" I shall tremble for you and Carl."

" Carl!" repeated Adolphus, " why
" is he. . . ."

" Confined in these prisons," added Christina, " as I told you."

Adolphus now on reflection repressed his astonishment and curiosity on Carl's account; he continued for some time musing with his eyes bent on the ground. " Have you ever heard," he demanded, " of the unhappy prisoner who was confined in this very
" dungeon? His fate was a very remarkable

“ markable one. Have you ever heard
 “ the name of Gustaf.”

“ Ah ! in this dungeon !” cried Christina with a shriek, interrupting him.

“ Yes,” cried Adolphus, “ and I
 “ now feel strongly convinced that he
 “ made his escape from this very dun-
 “ geon. Here are manuscripts writ-
 “ ten by him. I found them beneath
 “ this bed of straw. Read them, and
 “ give me your opinion.”

Christina grasped them eagerly :
 Adolphus pointed out to her attention
 the remarkable passage in which he
 seems to describe his escape :—
 “ Sixteen from the bottom, and six-
 “ teen across,” repeated Christina ; “ I
 “ am acquainted,” said she, with al-
 “ most all the different forms which
 “ ingenuity has devised and art ac-
 “ complished to elude the eye of sus-
 “ picion.

“ picion. If there is a secret passage
“ hereabouts, I think I shall be able
“ to discover it ; and that such a one
“ exists, this writing leads me to hope.”

Her eye now sparkled with more than her usual fire ; her beautiful form was dilated with courage and energy ; and she appeared no longer the timid and melancholy Christina, but every nerve seemed braced to execute her purpose with daring resolution. She fixed on the wall at the back of the dungeon for her trial. She exhibited extraordinary patience in this investigation. She counted sixteen paces every way ; then sixteen hands. She exhausted every known measure, but always with the same disappointment. She then counted sixteen stones from the bottom, and sixteen horizontally from the right, with no more success : she tried the same on the left.—

“ Oh !

“ Oh! heavens!” she exclaimed,
“ it is here !”

She now pointed out to the attention of Adolphus the sixteenth stone; by pressing it with force the stone turned as if on an axis; on the back of it there appeared a small iron ring. Adolphus, under the direction of Christina, pulled the ring toward him. A part of the wall, which seemed set in a solid frame, now opened like a door, and discovered a small niche. Adolphus took the lamp from its situation, and examined the niche. In a corner of it the stones which had composed the front of the wall had fallen down, and to the horror of Adolphus and Christina, they beheld the remains of the body of a female, which appeared to have been built up in the very body of the wall. The garments of a nun, torn in shreds, and rotten with moths and damp, still
VOL. III. C clung

clung around the skeleton. Some parts of the body preserved a wonderful freshness: the eyes seemed orbicular and of a horny substance; the face was not entirely destitute of colour, but the lips had fallen away, and two rows of teeth protruded of a dazzling whiteness: her dark raven hair had grown to an amazing length and touched the ground; the hands were crossed upon the breast, nothing remained of them but the white bones of the fingers, which yet seemed to embrace one another.

“ This is a horrid sight,” exclaimed Christina, “ but here is an inscription.” At the feet of the skeleton lay a little board, which appeared to have been nailed on the wall which had enclosed the unhappy victim. The inscription was written in monkish Latin which Adolphus translated for Christina as follows.

“ Pray

“ Pray for the soul of Gertrude ;
“ pray for the remission of her sins !
“ She was sentenced by the chapter to
“ descend alive to this tomb, which
“ contains her body ;—her soul is suf-
“ fering the punishment of the dark
“ sin she committed in breaking her
“ vow of chastity, at the solicitation
“ of Sigismund the Cruel, Count of
“ Mörner. Pray for the soul of Ger-
“ trude !”

“ Another of Sigismund’s crimes
“ come to light,” said Adolphus.

“ I have heard it related,” said
Christina, “ by my old nurse, who
“ was well versed in all the ancient
“ legends which told of the horrors
“ of this place, that in Sigismund’s
“ time a secret way was worked with
“ incredible labour to the very cell
“ where the nuns were immured alive
“ to expiate the same crime for which
“ this unfortunate,” said she, pointing

to the remains of Gertrude, " suffered.
" A lady of noble rank, who was sus-
" pected by her relatives of harbour-
" ing a passion for Sigismund, was
" confined by them in the cloisters of
" St. Bridget and was forced to take
" the veil; she was seduced by the
" artful Sigismund, and to effect her
" deliverance, this secret channel was
" cut from one of the galleries of the
" mine, which unknown to the sister-
" hood, extended beneath the very
" foundations of the cloister. She
" had been confined, they say, for two
" days without food, before the miners
" broke through the walls of her cell;
" her life was saved with difficulty.
" Sigismund made her change her
" name, and while he lived she con-
" tinued his favorite mistress. If my
" hopes are not deceiving me, I would
" fain persuade myself we are now
" in that very cell from which the
" fair

“ fair mistress of Sigismund was
“ rescued. Ascend into the niche;
“ explore it, Count, on every side,
“ whilst I shall on my knees offer up
“ prayers for your success.”

Adolphus instantly leaped up into the niche and Christina reached him the lamp. After a considerable delay he returned with a joyful countenance, and informed Christina that he had found a passage which he had contrived to penetrate with considerable difficulty. Christina on hearing this took a piece of chalk and inscribed on the floor some strange Runic characters, the meaning of which was not intelligible to Adolphus; she then ascended into the niche and carefully closed the secret door, and turned the stone, so that no appearance on the wall indicated the means by which they had escaped from the dungeon. A very narrow aperture presented itself

in the niche. Adolphus led the way and carried the lamp; they were obliged to creep on their hands and feet. At first they met with many obstacles, the boards which were placed across the top of the passage had in many places become decayed from age and fallen down; the earth and stones had followed and sometimes so completely blocked up the passage as to occasion a considerable delay, before they could make their way through them. It ran for a considerable length in a horizontal direction; it then dipped with various inclinations and ended with a flight of rude steps, which were almost perpendicular; a large stone had been rolled to the mouth of it, which the utmost exertion of Adolphus's strength removed with considerable difficulty. They quit-
ted the pent-up vapour and stagnant air of that rude winding passage and
were

were rejoiced to find themselves in a fresher atmosphere. They stood in, one of the ancient shafts of the mine, and to a considerable height above them the various tracks might be seen winding through the massy fragments of ore to numerous cavities, where, in former times each miner had pursued his separate labour, and near which he had constructed for his repose a rude and rocky cell.

Christina looked round her wildly and with apparent alarm. "She observed to Adolphus, that she had never been in this part of the mine before; " it is necessary," said she, " that I " should explore the extremity of this " gulf, before we can advance farther. " If you accompany me you will be recognized and then we are lost. I " am well known in this place and " therefore run no danger, and in case " I should meet with any of the senti-

“ nels, who are stationed through this
“ place, I can take another opportunity
“ to return and effect your deliverance.
“ In the mean time, do you conceal
“ yourself in one of those retreats
“ yonder, which the miners in former
“ days constructed for their temporary
“ dwellings ; there you will be con-
“ cealed from all observation and can
“ wait the time of my return.”

Adolphus assented to Christina's proposal. She quickly ascended one of the paths, followed by Adolphus, and her light figure glided like a sylph through various obstacles ; now darting through chasms and hanging over precipices, from which the form of danger itself might have shrunk, and where a bolder heart than hers might have been daunted : but Christina knew not what fear was ; her hardy life, had braced her nerves, and given to her limbs a strength and
activity

activity which the children of luxury never feel.

“ Here we will stop ; this is a good
 “ open,” she exclaimed, pointing to
 a rude and misshapen image of Christ,
 which was erected on the pinnacle of
 a projecting rock, and seemed to protect
 from harm the narrow cell which
 was formed in the rock below it.
 Round the mouth of the cell were
 scattered sundry instruments of labour,
 almost eaten by rust.

Christina, with an observing eye,
 marked all these things. “ I shall
 “ know this place again,” she said,
 “ and yon image shall be my guide.
 “ I will take the lamp ; its light would
 “ betray you, and I shall need it to
 “ to warn me where the abyss yawns
 “ beneath my feet, or when the foul
 “ waters of the mine rush across my
 “ path.”

On saying this she left Adolphus in

darkness and instantly darted towards the bottom of the shaft. He traced her progress by the devious line of light, which grew fainter and fainter every instant, and then suddenly disappeared. The minutes now appeared hours to Adolphus. He paced the little cell in anxious expectation; his ear now caught strange sounds, like the gurgling of distant water. He heard it plainer when he was near a cavity which he now discovered in the back of the cell. He crept through this along a narrow passage cut in the rock upon his hands and feet; he moved cautiously, feeling his way before him: one incautious step might destroy him, and dash him to a fathomless gulph. He now trembled to think that Christina might never return; she might be intercepted by his enemies, or in the immense extent of the mine she might fail to discover

cover the path by which they had ascended.

His reverie was interrupted by the repeated cries of some one near him; he returned through the same passage to the miners' cell. It was the voice of Christina calling to him in a tone of despair. The lamp which she held threw out now but feeble gleams, and every moment it threatened to expire in the socket.

"Hasten," cried Christina, "we have not a moment to lose, or 'ere we reach the only path now remaining for us to make trial of, the lamp will be extinguished."

While they descended together as rapidly as they could from the cell, Christina related to Adolphus the perils she had undergone in exploring that side of the shaft they were now quitting. A part of this immense mine had by some strange accident

taken fire several years before ; it was said that it could never be extinguished. The fire still continued to feed on the combustible matter which contained the ore, and to work its way through the bowels of the earth ; “ and “ I have heard it related,” added Christina, “ that at some future day “ immense wealth will be discovered “ in this immense laboratory of nature ; for the gold detached from “ the ore by the action of the fire, “ would descend in liquid streams to “ the bottom of this grand natural “ crucible.”

The shaft in which they stood, communicated with this burning cavern. Christina had penetrated through several of the galleries leading to it, but the air became so intensely heated as she advanced, that she retreated with terror, when she called to her recollection the stories she had heard related

lated of the burning mine. Adolphus, who had listened with the deepest attention to Christina's relation, now informed her of the passage he had discovered leading into the adjoining shaft. She appeared delighted on hearing this, for she said that she was now certain of finding the passage which would lead them once more to the light of day.

With cautious steps they now proceeded towards that part of the bottom of the shaft where Christina expected to find the passage which had formerly been used to convey the ore to the surface of the earth. The lamp but feebly irradiated the dingy colouring of the rocks, and the looks of Christina were at times anxiously directed towards it, as she feared it would expire ere they gained the miners' path. The air felt warm and oppressive. Those dangerous vapours
which

which had been confined and lain stagnant for ages, floated around them and hung heavy on their faculties. Their breath was drawn with difficulty, their ears tingled with strange sounds, and their vision was obscured and dimmed by strange shapes which seemed to throng around them. A dark arch of rugged rock now reared itself before them; the eye could discern no form in the void within it. The remains of a hand-rail were fastened to the side of some rugged steps which wound up the side of the rock and led to the top of the arch. "Here!" cried Christina, resting her hand upon it, and almost fainting with fatigue, "here is the passage we have been seeking!"

She could say no more; she appeared to be fainting. Adolphus held her in his arms, and with infinite solicitude recalled his preserver once to life. A shrill whistle was now heard

heard issuing from the roof of the mine. Christina on the approach of danger now collected the wanted energies of her mind, and carefully examined the resources of the place wherein they stood, in order to procure a refuge from their enemies. Adolphus seized a massy iron bar which lay against the rock, and awaited the approach of his foes with a resolution to sell his life dearly.

Another whistle, and instantly Otter with about twenty guards, well armed and carrying pine torches, appeared on the staircase which led to the roof of the mine and started forth from the top of the arch. A chuckle of savage delight expressed Otter's triumph when he beheld the pale forms of Christina and Adolphus at the foot of the passage.

"Surrender or die!" cried Otter.

"Miscreant," replied Adolphus,
"never

“ never will I surrender myself to thee. Behold,” said he, brandishing the iron above his head, “ my resolution to give thy carcase to the hungry raven, who follows thy footsteps lured by the scent of blood.”

“ Nay, then,” cried Otter, turning to the guards, “ let him abide by his decision ; forward, and instantly dispatch him.”

“ Monster,” cried Christina, “ hear me. I charge you by the name of Kruzen, nay more, by the name of”

“ Follow me,” cried Otter to the guards, interrupting her, “ and do not spare his life.”

When Adolphus heard them rush upon the steps, he stood in an attitude of defence. Christina whispered one word to him, when he instantly followed her example and threw himself with his face upon the ground. At
that

that instant the whole concave of the mine was filled with consuming fire, the blue flame of death darted from rock to rock, and a rolling noise, like the agitation of a mighty sea, or the thunder of earthquakes thrusting cities from their foundations, shook the vault with more than mortal sounds. When Adolphus ventured to look up, he beheld Otter bestriding him, with his countenance more than usually ferocious, his dagger drawn and ready to strike ; but the looks of the savage instantly changed, he dropped the dagger which his hand had so firmly clenched, his limbs trembled, and with fear-directed eyes he waited the approach of a being which seemed to issue from the earth beneath the vault. Adolphus and Christina now arose and beheld the earth strewn with the lifeless bodies of the guards. Otter and two of them only had escaped, who
were

were now prostrating themselves before the stranger, who was advancing towards them from the arch. His appearance was terrible and threatening, and Adolphus shrunk with involuntary horror when he traced a resemblance in this awful being to his mysterious visitor the Hungarian ! This man appeared younger, but his features were the same. He recollected the last awful occasion on which he had appeared to him at Cronberg, and if his father's fears spoke truly, this being was his uncle's shade; who came in nightly visitation to the Count to reproach him with dreadful crimes. He rebuked Otter in severe terms for risking the loss of so many lives by an explosion of the fire-damp, which he ought to have foreseen, and ordered him to bring some of his fellows in order to remove the bodies. Otter would have replied, but a look of the stranger silenced

silenced him and made him fly to execute his orders.

“Christina,” said the stranger,
 “you have infringed the laws of this
 “place, by daring to enter these pro-
 “hibited passages of the mine. Speak
 “not in reply. I know your thoughts.
 “Accompany these men, they will
 “lead you to a place more befitting
 “to your sex. Away! I have no
 “time to waste in parley.”

Christina cast a look of anxiety on Adolphus, whom she was now forced to leave. But it was in vain to attempt to thwart the purpose of the stern stranger, and Christina was obliged to yield herself to the protection of the guards, who now conducted her from the mine.

“Rash and inconsiderate!” exclaimed the stranger turning towards Adolphus. “How often am I obliged
 “to save thee from the effects of thine
 “own

“ own imprudence?” Adolphus was about to reply, but the stranger gave him a threatening look which compelled obedience, and exclaimed, “ be silent, and follow me !”

The stranger now ascended the steps which led to the top of the arch, and Adolphus followed in mute astonishment. His faculties were bound up in fear, and he listened in horrid expectation to hear no sound returned to the mute foot-fall of the shadowy stranger ! but the hollow earth groaned beneath his tread, and Adolphus listened to that sound with pleasure. He now observed the stranger more minutely, and his attention was particularly attracted by the remarkable helmet which he wore, the front of which was covered with the skull, scalp, and fangs of a tiger. He recollected the name of Tigerhielm, which was repeated by Hoffer in the cemetery, which

which in the Swedish language signifies *tiger-helmet*, and it seemed to be designative of his awful monitor, and of the chief of the confederates. After ascending these steps they passed along the top of the arch in silence. They proceeded across a narrow causeway, on each side of which there lay a gulf, deep and obscure. The mine in this place approached the surface of the earth, and there was a large opening through a chasm in the roof of it through which the heavens were visible.

Tigerhielm turned round to Adolphus, and pointing to the starry heavens, he exclaimed, "Adolphus, can'st thou read the stars?"

"I am not learned in astrology," replied Adolphus.

"Look upward on the broad expanse of heaven," exclaimed Tigerhielm enthusiastically; "behold these
"countless

“ countless suns which lighten heaven
“ with their fires—and yonder see—
“ can'st thou not see the mighty giant
“ Orion blazing in our zenith? In his
“ belt, which is studded with gems of
“ various lustre, there lurks a little
“ star, 'twas once a brilliant—do you
“ attend?”

“ I am wrapt in your discourse,”
replied Adolphus.

“ You may perceive,” continued Tigerhielm; “ it is bedimmed, and lacks
“ its lustre, as though the skirt of a
“ watery cloud hung upon it—or the
“ tears of the miserable, the guilty,
“ and the damned had been sucked
“ up and attracted by its orb.”

“ It is a faint and watery star,” observed Adolphus.

“ Then in it read your fate,” continued Tigerhielm; “ it is the star which
“ guides the destiny of your house!”

Adolphus trembled to hear those
words

words from him who never yet deceived him, and he gave way to the superstitious feelings which possessed him, and which ruled the actions of even enlightened men in those days, with a power of which we can form but a faint idea. From the many extraordinary occurrences which had befallen him of late, he grew credulous of evil. His despondency was now at its height, and he yielded to the irresistible desire which possessed him of learning the secrets of futurity, and daring the worst that might befall him. He interrogated his inspired leader upon his wayward destiny, and sought to excite the compassion of one who might become his deliverer from the evil to come. But Tigerhielm rebuked him, and would not answer aught to his questions.

They now descended into one of the chambers of the mine which appeared

peared to Adolphus singularly silent and deserted. The light which was emitted by the torch which Tigerhielm carried barely illuminated the rocky projections of the different galleries, which seemed to radiate from this central vault into the different recesses of this subterraneous world. Nearly in the centre of the dark glen stood a turret built of rough and ponderous masses of ore. Tigerhielm thundered at its low and massive door, which was instantly opened by some one from within, and Tigerhielm and Adolphus mounted up into an apartment of this extraordinary abode!

CHAP. XIII.

•The fatal time

Cuts off all ceremonies and vows of love,
 And unple interchange of sweet discourse,
 Which so long sundered friends should dwell upon.

SHAKESPEARE.

“IF the principles of Adolphus of
 “ Mörner are the same as those of
 “ Adolphus de Beaumarchais,” ex-
 claimed Tigerhielm, when he had ushered
 Adolphus into a chamber of the
 tower, “he has here nothing to fear.”

“ From my early principles I have
 “ never swerved,” replied Adolphus.

“ ’Tis well,” observed Tigerhielm ;
 “ now listen, and weigh well my
 “ words—from this place no stranger
 “ ever emerged or viewed again the
 VOL. III. D “ light

“ light of day, except on one condi-
“ tion. This condition I mean to
“ propose to you, as I should to all
“ strangers who might have penetrat-
“ ed these recesses. That great de-
“ sign which forms the subject of
“ our midnight deliberations, it is no
“ longer necessary to keep secret from
“ you. We waive all delicacy, and
“ discard all fear, in making this com-
“ munication; for we *know* that it is
“ impossible that you should ever be-
“ tray us. In case of your refusal to
“ accept the condition which we
“ offer you freedom, we *know* that in
“ the secret dungeons of this place
“ you shall pine, and wither, even
“ until doomsday, without the possi-
“ bility of being discovered—yea, in
“ dungeons fathoms deep, from whence
“ the foot of living man never yet
“ emerged. If you betray us, in gain-
“ ing your freedom, you damn your
“ eternal

“ eternal soul, by the violation of
 “ your oath. But think not to escape :
 “ a thousand daggers will be uplifted
 “ —a thousand secret avengers will
 “ be ready to drink your blood ; and
 “ I, even I, who hitherto have guard-
 “ ed thee, at some peril—(such is the
 “ dread bond by which our brother-
 “ hood is cemented)—would be oblig-
 “ ed to slay thee, ver’t thou even my
 “ son. Think not, therefore, to de-
 “ ceive me and tremble at the dread-
 “ ful extremities which await you. In
 “ these recesses the hand of God has
 “ gat’hered together the elect, who are
 “ to oppose the reign of Antichrist
 “ in this northern land. A bigotted
 “ king, the tyrant of his people, and a
 “ traitor to the laws and sacred or-
 “ dinances of his country, has stretch-
 “ ed forth his arm in defence of Po-
 “ pery, and has cried unto his people,
 “ behold the true religion ! Now we
 “ will

“ will not bow down before this image,
“ which the king has set up; and we,
“ the White Cross Knights, have
“ sworn to defend our religion, even
—“ though the king perish.”

“ What! kill the king?” cried Adolphus, who had listened to this dread relation with astonishment.

“ What is it startles you?” said Tigerhielm.

“ Treason and rebellion!” replied Adolphus.

“ Empty sounds,” exclaimed Tigerhielm, “ and methinks the distinction
“ is too nice for the conscience of a
“ Hugonot!—However, I have done
“ —I leave you to your meditations—
“ ponder well upon the condition on
“ which I offer you freedom. By
“ taking the solemn oath which binds
“ us together, you save your life, and
“ your immortal soul! and you may
“ carve out for yourself the way, to
“ imperishable

“imperishable fame, by joining that
 “sacred band, who are sworn to ful-
 “fill the prophecies of the Most
 “High. Once more I warn you to
 “beware how you attempt your es-
 “cape. I am present everywhere.
 “Through these walls the eyes of the
 “avengers see thee ; and through the
 “air are viewless spirits who will
 “watch your steps. When you want
 “food, sound this bell and your at-
 “tendant will appear. I must be-
 “gone—the air freshens which sa-
 “vours of the morning of the upper
 “world.” To-morrow at midnight,
 “when our day begins, expect me.”

Tigerhielm disappeared, and left
 Adolphus to ponder on his extraordi-
 nary situation. His fate was singular,
 and the mysteries in which he was in-
 volved seemed to thicken around him.
 He saw himself now in the power of
 a man, who had strangely interested

himself in all that concerned him. Considering the many awful circumstances which had accompanied their intercourse, he was induced to believe that he was a being, who, for some wise purposes was endowed with supernatural powers. He could not resist the many proofs which he had given of his awful agency, and his mind sunk, and was enthralled under this powerful conviction. If he accepted of the condition which had been offered to him, he dreaded to think of the umbrage which such a step would give his father, if he was still alive. In the measures which were in the contemplation of the White Cross Knights, it might be possible that active and open warfare might be decided on. His father, at such a crisis, he was convinced would be found by the side of his sovereign, and he trembled to think that in the field
of

of battle their hostile lances might encounter one another. But Adolphus shuddered when he thought of that dread being whose prisoner he was, and of the terrible alternative which was submitted to his choice. He looked round on the walls of his prison—there was no window; no aperture, save the door by which he had entered. The walls were covered with astrological instruments, and strange tools, of which Adolphus knew not the use. The door was firmly secured, and he saw that his only chance of escaping rested with his attendant. He rung the bell which Tigerhielm had directed him to use.

In a few minutes the door was opened cautiously, and his attendant entered. Adolphus was struck with the appearance of this man. He was a Laptlander; low in stature, and dressed in the costume of his tribe:

his small grey sloping eyes gave no sign of intelligence; and from the precision, and slow regularity of his motions, he might be taken for an automaton, which the masterly skill and art of Tigerhielm had formed, and which mechanically imitated the actions of life. Adolphus addressed him in a manner which was calculated to operate on his feelings: he waited some time for an answer; for some kind expression of sympathy or condolence. The Laplander was immovable, and made no reply. Adolphus pointed to the lamp, which was nearly extinguished. The Laplander disappeared, and quickly returned with wherewithal to trim it, and stood for a few minutes in expectation of being dismissed, or of receiving further orders. Adolphus was resolved to make another effort. He approached him and besought him to take compassion on
" him

him, and assist him in regaining his freedom. The Laplander made a sign of dissent. "Ah!" said Adolphus, "if you understand me, why do you not speak? give me at least the cheering sound of a human voice in this dreary solitude." The man now approached Adolphus—pointed to his mouth, and waved his hand. Adolphus understood that sign, and saw that it was dreadfully confirmed; for that unfortunate being had no tongue. Adolphus looked round for some mode of communicating his ideas. He found a piece of chalk, with which he wrote on the dark wall of his prison, "*I wish to regain my liberty.*" The Laplander made a sign that he did not understand it, and Adolphus, in despair, was obliged to give up the attempt. It is unnecessary to detail the melancholy thoughts which possessed

D 5

essed the mind of Adolphus during his imprisonment.

Tigerhielm appeared at the appointed hour, and found Adolphus not yet resolved ; his spirit however was broken and he listened passively while Tigerhielm menaced him. " But there was one word which roused him like a spell, "*Edda*," exclaimed Tigerhielm, "*Edda* is in our power—and Mont-
" bazon thy friend is a member of our
" confederacy!" Adolphus found he could resist no longer, and yet when he gave to Tigerhielm his consent to take the oath of a White Cross Knight, he felt gloomy presages of evil stealing across his mind.

We shall not follow Adolphus into that dread recess, where the *awful* oath was administered to him ; that oath which froze his blood with horror, which bound him by its dreadful penalty

ty

ty to yield up the dearest of nature's ties, if the interest of the confederacy demanded the sacrifice—to pursue with the avenging steel...with fire, and with blood...the victims whom it secretly condemned—to plunge a poignard in the heart, even of a friend—to poison at the banquet—to murder on the highway—to burn at midnight—to drag even from the sanctuary, and from before the altars of God, those who were denounced as enemies to the order of the White Cross Knights!

A cold sweat bedewed the limbs of Adolphus. “Gracious God!” thought he, “is this the warfare of knights?—
 “ is this the honourable use of arms
 “ and the observance of the laws of
 “ chivalry?—is this the toleration of
 “ Protestants, or the morality which
 “ is taught by our holy religion?
 “ Oh religion, pure and divine as you
 “ were taught, by the celestial lips of
 D 6 . “ the

“ the humble Redeemer—how manifold are the sins which in all ages have been committed in thy name!! ”

There was no retrospection taken of the conduct of Wildebrand towards Adolphus; by the tenor of his oath he was obliged to forgive all the severity which the White Cross Knights might have inflicted on him, and by their mutual obligation, Adolphus and Wildebrand were sworn to defend one another as brothers. Tigerhielm was well aware of the indecent haste which Wildebrand had shewn on this occasion to gratify his revenge; but his mind was occupied at that time with affairs of higher moment, and as Wildebrand was deprived of his command and of the power of injury at the same time, Tigerhielm did not deem it worthy of notice.—Adolphus; immediately on regaining his liberty, visited the turret of Olaus, in order that he

• he might conduct him to the retreat of Edda and Montbazon. It was Tigerhielm who had directed him to Olaus ; as the warder was the only inmate of the castle who was acquainted with it, he supplied them with provisions by a secret entrance in the night, and so artfully was it concealed, that it baffled, as we have seen, all the penetration and vigilance of Wildebrand. At the hour of twelve the secret passages leading to it were opened ; and the reader may recollect the unjust suspicions which Adolphus entertained against the old warder, when he was obliged to break off in his narrative, and attend the nightly orders of Montbazon. Olaus paid a vassal's homage to Adolphus, when he announced to the warder his name and title, and the late events which had befallen him ; but the eyes of Olaus were suffused with tears which he could not suppress,

press, when he offered his congratulations on this intelligence. To Heaven he addressed fervent prayers for the re-establishment of his illustrious house, when tears almost choaked his utterance, and he expressed his warm wishes for the young Count's happiness.

“ The moment,” said Olaus, “ that
“ you appeared at the portal, my
“ mind misgave me ; for, Christ pro-
“ tect me, I thought the Count, your
“ father,” was dead, and you were his
“ spirit—for thus he looked, with hair
“ as dark, and eyes as brilliant, ’ere
“ my lord, the Count Harold, died—
“ but after that he wasted away to a
“ shadow.”

Adolphus indulged the loquacity of the old warder, who beguiled the time with his long stories, until midnight ; when Olaus conducted him to the retreat of Montbazon.

We shall not pretend to describe
the

the transports of Adolphus when he once more pressed his beloved Edda to his bosom—nor his joy in meeting in Montbazon, who received him with a warmth which surprized Adolphus, when he recollected the coldness of his manner towards him when last they met. The sudden and unexpected appearance of Adolphus had deprived Edda of her usual feminine reserve, and the emotion which she shewed, betrayed to Adolphus the flattering secret of her love. As soon as Edda had withdrawn, Adolphus pressed Montbazon to give consent to their union.

“ Ah ! ” said Montbazon gravely,
“ you forget Adolphus that you are
“ still pursued with misfortune. It
“ was ever my strongest wish to see
“ you and Edda united ; but I was
“ withheld by a dreadful considera-
“ tion, for I had every reason to be-
“ lieve,

“ lieve, from many links of evidence,
“ which came within my knowledge,
“ that Edda was the daughter of the
“ Count de Beaumarchais. Think,
“ Adolphus, oh think of what I felt,
“ when I perceived the brother falling
“ in love with the sister, and she (for
“ I need not now conceal it from you)
“ attached to him. To have disclosed
“ this suspicion to you might have cost
“ me all the happiness of my life, for I
“ could not endure the thought of
“ parting with Edda, the sole stay
“ and prop of my existence ; for if my
“ conjecture was rightly founded, you,
“ as her natural protector, had the
“ power of claiming her.”

Adolphus admitted this justification of Montbazon's conduct, and his countenance brightened when he recollected the incontestible proofs which he might bring forward to prove that he was the son of Count Mörner,
a rela-

a relationship which 'ere while embittered his existence, and now (so capricious seemed his fate,) he felt that he owed to it the greatest happiness of his life.

Adolphus urged Montbazon with all the impetuosity of youth, and he was induced the sooner to consent by reflecting on the chances to which his life might be exposed in the approaching conflict, and on the destitute state in which Edda would be left when deprived of her protector. Adolphus having obtained his promise, quitted their retreat and was conducted by Olaus to the chamber within the turret, the same which he had prepared for him on his first visit to Riddarholmen. No false delicacy, no affected scruples intervened to prevent his marriage: when Edda was acquainted with the approbation given by Montbazon, she gave her hand to
the

the faithful knight whom she had long secretly loved, and it was arranged that in a few days the ceremony should be performed by a Lutheran priest whom Olaus was acquainted with. It was not considered safe to proceed beyond the boundaries of Riddarholmen, unless they were accompanied by a troop of the White Cross Knights as a guard. It was desirable to avoid publicity on every account, but especially to secure the secret of Edda's retreat in the castle; for in the troubles in which the kingdom was then involved, and with the prospect of a more open and dangerous warfare, it carried consolation to the heart of Adolphus to think how securely Edda might be concealed during his absence. It was therefore agreed on that the ceremony should be performed at midnight in the chapel of St. Bridget's abbey. Montbazon had fixed on the

hour

hour of midnight as that best adapted for secrecy; there was no interruption then to be dreaded from the White Cross Knights, who always at midnight commenced *their* day in their gloomy vaults; the chiefs then assembled in council, and the troops were caparisoned ready to sally forth to deeds of blood when headed by their fanatic leaders. Montbazon, in order to give no room for suspicion, determined to attend the council on that evening, and Adolphus stood excused on the special permission of Tigerhielm. It was therefore arranged that they should induce the priest to wait half an hour, in which time Montbazon expected to join them.

Montbazon went forth early to the council, and when it struck three quarters to midnight, Adolphus and Edda, preceded by Olaus, emerged from the secret passages of the castle.

They

They crossed the courts in silence, and Edda leaned tremblingly on the arm of Adolphus. It was a bleak winter's night and the ground was covered with snow. Edda felt herself more than commonly depressed, and Adolphus endeavoured to cheer her as they walked towards the abbey ; but he felt himself at times a dejection for which he could not account, and which the occasion ought to have dispelled. There was no light save the twinkling of the stars, and their dark figures seemed to walk gloomily and at a funeral pace through the heavy snow. Adolphus unconsciously turned his eyes towards the constellation Orion, and he was sick at heart when he recollected the discourse of Tigerhielm and beheld the star which influenced his house looking more than commonly dull and obscure. Olaus carried a pine torch, but in order to elude the obser-

observation of the knights, in case any stragglers should be abroad, he did not intend to light it until they entered St. Bridget's chapel. They now passed down the alley of dark pines which led to the abbey. A few melancholy cypress trees which surrounded its grey ruins were now and then bowed by the breeze which sighed through them, and the mournful note of a raven, who was disturbed by their approach, and whose wing flapped them as it flew past, was their ill-omened greeting.

Adolphus, when he beheld again the interior of the desolate abbey, contrasted his present situation on the verge of happiness with his former wretched one when he first visited it, and he sought to acquire additional cheerfulness by this reflection. While Olaus stopped in one of the aisles to strike a light, Adolphus and Elda proceeded

proceeded up the grand aisle towards the altar. They anxiously looked through the interior of the abbey and explored its obscure arcades. All was still—there was no appearance which could fill their minds with the prospect of danger. They had now entered the body of the chapel, and stood before the statue of St. Bridget, which was the place of meeting which Olaus had appointed with the Lutheran priest. He had not yet arrived, and while they stood, the clock of Riddarholmen proclaimed the hour of midnight. Edda was agitated by extreme fear when she found herself within the awful precincts of this dreary place at such an hour, and she clung still closer to the arm of Adolphus. The occasion itself was a solemn one, and there was a feeling which she could not suppress, and which at times caused her tears to flow bitterly. It was the reflection

Reflection that her future husband, her beloved Adolphus, was a member of that unfortunate family whose prosperity had been blasted by the wrath of heaven; and the melancholy monuments by which she was surrounded, told how short was their span of days, and by what numerous woes they were embittered. The name of *Arvedina*, which she read on her tomb, called up many mournful images, and Edda felt with all a woman's feeling, when she reflected that the depraved hearts of his ancestors had not been redeemed even by woman's tenderness, and she dreaded with an apprehension she could not conquer, that in marrying the beloved object of her choice, she was dooming herself to calamity and entering into an alliance with misfortune. The melancholy stories with which Olaus had at times entertained her, now rose before her imagination in all
•
their

their frightful imagery—the awful solitude of the scene around her; the lengthened shadows of the aisles losing themselves in utter darkness; the thousand shapes of fear which thronged the gloom, added to her emotion. Tremblingly alive to the horrors of the place, she bent a listening ear when the wind agitated the foliage of the dark pines and cypress trees which grew against the beautiful remains of the orient window, or shook the tattered banners of the knights of Mörner, which waved over her head.” She thought she beheld something moving near her, and she feared to look that way again: but her eye was again forcibly drawn to the spot. She now saw an object close to her—palpable and distinct, and she viewed that which harrowed up her soul with fear. While she leaned on the cover of a monument of black marble, she beheld a
human

human head rising from the tomb. It ascended exactly opposite to her, and stared *her* for a few moments in the face.

Edda felt herself incapable of expression; she could not utter a cry: fear transfixed her to the spot, and she felt herself constrained with horrible curiosity to dwell on the object before her. That *terrible face* she recollected to have seen before; and it had made an impression on her, which time had never been able to efface. It was so connected with one of the most remarkable events of her life, that the recollection of it could only terminate with her existence. It was the face of the hermit, as she termed him, in her childish language, who had decoyed her from her home, and who had commanded the hermit Paul to kill her. The face seemed to recognize her, and to examine with minute

attention a black cross which she wore on her bosom—the same cross which she wore in infancy, and which was always placed near her heart; for Edda had been told it was her mother's gift. The *face* looked once more darkly on Edda, then frowned and vanished! At that moment Adolphus felt Edda's arm fall from his support lifeless. She shrieked and fainted in his arms. While Adolphus tried to recover the maid he threw a glance of apprehension on St. Bridget's statue. He recollected the strange sighs he had seen there, and he was apprehensive that something similar might have given a sudden alarm to Edda. But all was quiet, and the gigantic head of the image frowned in ghastly stillness. The cries of Adolphus alarmed Olaus, who had succeeded in kindling his torch. When he beheld Edda's situation, he stuck
the

the torch on high, in the hand of St. Bridget's image, and ran to a sacred and blessed well, which pilgrims had formerly frequented for its miraculous cures; he drew some water from it, and hastened back with it to Edda, who quickly recovered from her swoon. She had scarcely time to relate to Adolphus the cause of her alarm, ere the Lutheran priest arrived. Adolphus endeavoured to dispel her fears, by suggesting that it possibly might have been the priest who was in search of them whose face she had seen; but Edda was too dreadfully impressed with the remarkable countenance she beheld to be mistaken in her assertion. Adolphus left Edda in the care of the priest, while he and Olaus searched the aisles of the abbey on every side; and after examining the ruins which adjoined the chapel, they found not the remotest cause for suspicion. On
E 2 returning

returning to the chancel, they found the priest impatient to begin the ceremony. It had now struck the half-hour past midnight, and Montbazon had not arrived according to his appointment. Adolphus soothed the priest, and endeavoured to create a delay of a few minutes, in order to await Montbazon's arrival, who was to give away the bride. They stood for some few minutes longer, during which the Lutheran priest opened his book, and every thing was ready to commence the holy office. The night was keen and frosty, and they all stood shivering in the cold night air. Edda felt a damp chill coursing through her blood, and while Adolphus gazed ardently upon her, he was alarmed to see her countenance vie in whiteness with the alabaster saints, which surrounded her.

Three quarters after midnight now struck.

struck. "I can no longer wait," exclaimed the priest, "the air is freezing
 " my blood: 'tis well for youth that
 " can stand the severity of such a
 " night! besides the country has rung
 " with strange reports concerning this
 " place—my way home is long, and
 " the moon is gone down—I pray you
 " procure another to do this office—
 " either let the ceremony proceed, or
 " I must demand to be dismissed."

"*Be dismissed! be dismissed!*" repeated a voice at a distance.

"This is strange," exclaimed Adolphus, looking round him anxiously,
 "is it the echo?"

"*The echo!*" repeated the voice, with a laugh of derision.

Adolphus now imagined that some of the White Cross Knights were amusing themselves at his expense, and he paid no longer any attention to this interruption; but it was not so with

Edda, who grew more alarmed at every new circumstance. Adolphus, finding it in vain to remonstrate with the priest, and giving up all hopes of the arrival of Montbazon, informed him that they were now ready, and desired him to proceed. Before the priest commenced the service, he said, "according to the custom of our holy religion, it is fitting, if the lady Edda has any father living, he should appear."

"*Appear! appear!*" repeated the voice at a distance.

"This mockery of a solemn rite," exclaimed Adolphus, looking round him, "shall not go unpunished. Proceed, father, in the ceremony, the warder will act as a father, and give away the bride."

Olaus now stood in the appointed place, and supported the trembling Edda, while the Lutheran priest performed the awful ceremony, which

was

was concluded without further interruption. After a cold and formal congratulation to the new married couple, the priest departed, and Olaus having extinguished the torch, they hastened to leave the abbey. While they proceeded along one of the side aisles of the chapel, Adolphus imagined that he beheld a dark figure flitting between the pillars, at some distance from them. He had no doubt but that this person was the mysterious intruder, and it was evident from the movements of the figure, that he wished to observe them without betraying himself. Adolphus determined to pursue this man, in order to ascertain with what views he watched them. He instantly drew his sword and followed him: the man retreated, and as he turned down one of the opposite passages, Adolphus perceived he was attired in the garments of a monk.

Adolphus returned in a few minutes without being able to overtake the fugitive monk; but he had seen enough to convince him that it was his old enemy Rezzonico.

They now quitted the abbey, and once more entered their retreat in Riddarholmen, without meeting any further alarm. Montbazou did not return that night; and when his absence was protracted to some days, Edda became seriously alarmed. Adolphus could not conceal his own fears on the subject, and he now punctually attended the meetings of the knights, in order to be the first to hear any intelligence respecting him. It seems on the night of their marriage a dispatch was received from a personage of illustrious rank. It was directed to the chief of the White Cross Knights. Tigerhielm perused the letter with great agitation; he addressed the
knights

knights who were present on the subject, but he did not communicate to them the contents of the mysterious billet. He told them he was obliged to go forth on a service of danger, which if crowned with success, would fulfil the most sanguine hopes of the confederacy. In this perilous expedition, he selected but four knights to accompany him, and for the rest, he placed his reliance upon that God who fought by their side. He commanded them to abstain from any expedition against the Catholic Barons in his absence; and he threatened those who disobeyed his orders with the severest punishment. As Tigerhielm selected but three knights on the spot, Adolphus imagined that Montbazou accompanied him on this dangerous service.

One evening, when passing to the council, Adolphus met Conrad, and

his great surprise, he was accompanied by his dog Wolf. After the disappearance of his master at Hamburgh, the dog had followed Adolphus; and he was along with him on that fatal night when he was thrown from his carriage down the precipice, and discovered by Carl. Conrad gratified the anxiety which Adolphus expressed for him, by the following relation. We have informed the reader of the narrow escape of Adolphus in Hamburgh from the plots of his two greatest enemies, Rezzonico and Wildebrand.

Conrad, who suspected that some villainy was concealed under the mystery which the stranger who lodged opposite to them affected, felt no scruple in acquiring a knowledge of his plans by the most desperate means. Ere he proceeded to hire the vessel which was to convey them from Hamburgh, he entered the house in which the stranger

stranger dwelt, passed through the rooms on tiptoe, and overheard a conversation between Wildebrand, Rezonico, and the Jew, who were concealed in a closet, the subject of which was the destruction of Adolphus. Unfortunately Conrad was discovered by them before he could effect his escape, and as he had heard enough to put their lives in his power, his life would certainly have been sacrificed to their security, if he had not preserved himself by a ready stratagem. He was detected at a window exactly opposite to Adolphus's lodging; and he had the address to persuade Wildebrand that he had followed Adolphus to seek that opportunity to assassinate him, which his precipitate departure from Glatz had deprived him of. He counterfeited the blood-thirsty villain, and he produced a pistol which he had in readiness to perpetrate the crime. It

was Conrad's endeavour to be employed as the instrument of their vengeance, that he might have the power of warning Adolphus of their designs. Wildebrand was deceived; but Rezonico did not fall into the snare: he saw that the warmth of Conrad's manner was affected, and it was agreed on finally that the Jew should be employed, and Conrad kept in confinement until the object was effected. He was conveyed in the evening on board a vessel which was laden with warlike stores for the new confederacy of the White Cross Knights, and in which Wildebrand shortly after sailed to join them in Sweden. The warmth with which Conrad affected to second the designs of Wildebrand not only freed him from his chains, but even gained him his favour, and Conrad was now retained in the service of the White Cross Knights.

When

When Adolphus arrived in Sweden, he was traced in his route by the emissaries of Wildebrand. The co-operation of the White Cross Knights in his plan of destroying him was procured by Wildebrand, who described Adolphus as an active Catholic partizan, and his death would have been certain if Conrad had not saved him. His assumed zeal in the cause ranked him with the foremost. He had drawn the charges of the harquebusses of his companions, and he was on the point of giving Adolphus assistance against his enemies, when the horses took fright at the flash of their guns, and threw Adolphus out of the carriage beyond the reach of friend or foe. His servant Bertrand was the only life sacrificed on that occasion. His body was afterwards discovered by the White Cross Knights on the point of a rock; it was disfigured with wounds and
dreadfully.

dreadfully lacerated; and as they examined it only by the faint light of the moon, Wildebrand was persuaded that it was the body of Adolphus, and that he had at length got rid of his rival. Wolf, who accompanied Adolphus, no sooner beheld his master than he leaped towards him, and followed him ever since. The stratagem practised by Conrad in the mine to save Adolphus was discovered by Otter. When the affair was reported, Conrad was imprisoned, but released soon after by the orders of Tigerhielm. The consternation of the knights on the disappearance of Adolphus from his dungeon was described by Conrad to have been extreme. The *Runic* inscription which Christina left in the dungeon previous to their escape, was copied from an ancient altar dedicated to one of the gods of the northern mythology. The conversion of the Swedes to christianity

tianity was not followed by the abjuration of all former superstitions ; and heated as the minds of the White Cross Knights were by religious fanaticism and by the enthusiasm of pretended religious inspiration, they had no difficulty in believing that Adolphus was rescued from his dungeon by supernatural means. Otter found some difficulty in persuading some of the guards to accompany him to those parts of the mine situated under these dungeons, where he succeeded in preventing the escape of Adolphus.

Adolphus, grateful for the many proofs of Conrad's attachment, took him now under his own special protection, and he acquainted him with the secret of Edda's retreat, in order that Olaus, who was become very infirm, might be assisted by him in his attendance. Carl had been conveyed to the cloister prisons at the same time with

with Adolphus : when he had recovered from his wounds, he was set at liberty by Christina, who was furnished with the means of doing so by Baron Kruzen. This brave man was still confined to a sick bed ; but disease had driven his mind to reflection and rendered him repentant, and he had given to Christina a solemn promise of marriage on his recovery. When the Countess Eleonora was confined in Riddarholmen by her malady, Christina was in constant attendance on her ; but this was carefully concealed from the Count. The Olofs, who felt great sympathy and compassion for the misfortunes of that illustrious family, had long forgotten every cause of resentment, and endeavoured by every attention and respect in their power to disarm the Count of that fatal hatred he felt towards them ; but it was impossible for them to have satisfied the
curiosity

curiosity of Adolphus on the subject of these frequent visits of Christina, as they feared lest it should come to the ears of Count Mörner. During these visits Christina had discovered the many secret passages with which the castle abounded, and its connection in some places with the ruins of the mine. She imparted her discoveries to Krusen, and it was principally through her means that Riddarholmen became the scene of those exploits which rendered it ever after so memorable, and that there the sacred banner of the White Cross Knights was first unfurled.

Adolphus was informed that his unhappy mother was obliged to be kept in stricter confinement than ever. Laurentius sometimes paid a visit to his patient, and on these occasions he would often meet Adolphus; but the sight of the good monk was no longer grateful

grateful to Adolphus, his heart was pressed by a secret he could not communicate to him. He felt the intolerable weight of the oath he had taken, and he did not know the moment when the good Laurentius himself might be denounced, and he forced to become . . . his assassin ! The monk saw that Adolphus was not happy, he perceived too that he avoided him, and although he could not conjecture the cause which had given him umbrage, yet even when Adolphus did not greet him, Laurentius never passed him without a *benedicite*. Adolphus sometimes visited his mother in her confinement ; but on these occasions his appearance excited the usual images of horror in her mind. She imagined that it was her lord who came to her in wrath—she would kneel to him, and implore him not to put her to death—she would tax him with murder, and
‘ then

then ask where he had hid *her daughter*? This last idea was predominant in her mind, and induced Adolphus to pay it some attention. He felt it was extremely probable, his sister might have been brought up at a distance from the fatal influence of Riddarholmen in the same manner as he was. Might she not at present be *alive*? perhaps in obscurity, in want? These were anxious considerations, and such as a brother, who was desirous to demonstrate his affection, felt deeply. Laurentius professed his ignorance on this head, and Olaus referred Adolphus to Herman, the Count's confidant at the time of her reported death; but Adolphus, who was fully acquainted with the flight of Herman and the fatal consequences of that deposition which he laid before the King, and which might still threaten his father's life, was well aware
that

that from him he could expect no immediate information: he was obliged therefore to defer until a more favourable season those inquiries which his sympathizing mind prompted him to make on this subject.

CHAP. XIV.

———— Before whose blast the voice of song,
And mirth, and hope, and happiness, all fly,
Nor ever dare return.

REMAINS OF H. K. WHITE.

———— Farewell,
Thou pure impiety, thou impious purity;
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love.

SHAKESPEARE.

It was now eight days after their marriage, when Olaus, who was always punctual, entered their retreat at the hour of midnight. Adolphus read some extraordinary intelligence in the countenance of the old warder.

“I bring you a billet, my lord,” exclaimed Olaus, “which is directed to the Count Adolphus Mörner. I found it this morning, fastened to an arrow which was sticking in the door

“ door of my turret ; it needs must
“ have been discharged by a cross-
“ bow from the ramparts. God send
“ it bodes no ill.”

Adolphus hastily opened the letter :
it was from Montbazou ; and he read
as follows to the agitated Edda :—

“ Fear not for me ; I am in safety ;
“ and we prosper in the sacred cause
“ for which we took up arms. Can
“ it be true that Adolphus is still
“ buried in amorous sloth, and his
“ father. obliged to fly from the
“ power of his enemies ? Charged with
“ high crimes and misdemeanors he
“ wanders through the land ; and
“ while the son indulges in luxury,
“ the father has not even a roof to
“ shelter his head. He is accused of
“ the murder of his brother. Seek him
“ out, Adolphus.. Seek thy father,
“ and bear him this comfort : tell him
“ his *brother lives !* When next we
“ meet

"meet we shall talk more of this.
" Commend me to my more than
" daughter.

" Thine, with God's blessing,

" GASPARD DE MONTBAZON."

This billet relieved the anxiety they felt on Montbazon's account; but Adolphus pondered long on the strange contents of this letter. He felt that he merited the just rebuke which Montbazon had given him, and he determined to seek his father without delay; succour him in his necessities, or share his misfortunes.

Montbazon had not mentioned in this letter the time in which it was probable he would return; he had not indicated the place where it was likely that Adolphus would meet his father. But the necessity of Adolphus's interposing between his father and the king's speedy justice, was apparent and urgent. A moment's delay

lay might cause him to be too late to save his father's life. He shuddered at this thought, and sprang from the arms of Edda which were entwined round him. He called Olaus to him, and commanded him forthwith to buckle on his armour. While the warder performed this duty Adolphus endeavoured to console Edda who appeared very much dejected. She was well aware of the necessity of his departure, and she sought not to detain him; but she could not repress the presage of disaster which weighed down her spirits; and more than once her fears whispered to her that their short-lived happiness had departed and would never return. Struggling to conceal her apprehensions, and desirous of hiding those feelings which would only agonize Adolphus, and might render him less capable of executing his praiseworthy design, she assumed a
courage

courage which was foreign to her heart; and while with affected gaiety she tied his silken sash across his cuirass of steel, she tried to conceal the drops which dimmed its lustre, and smiled upon him through her tears. With a beating heart Adolphus tore himself from her embrace. He commended her to the protection of Olaus, and crossed the avenue leading to the cloister-prisons, which was the usual entrance of the knights when dismounted. Adolphus thought it necessary to attend on this evening, in order to give notice of his absence, which might be protracted to a term exceeding their usual limits of indulgence. The chief tie which kept this extraordinary community in subjection was strict discipline, and to this all the members were obliged to conform.

When Adolphus crossed the ruins of the abbey he heard the sound of a

foot on the marble pavement. He walked forward cautiously, for the place was apt for surprise, and between the pillars the assassin might take his stand, and spring forth with deadly aim. A figure now crossed the end of the aisle which he was approaching, and stood in the center of the nave of the abbey awaiting his approach. By the star-light, which was exceeding bright, Adolphus plainly distinguished the tall figure of Rezonico. The monk stood still and hailed Adolphus as he passed.

“Are you alone?” demanded Rezonico solemnly; “do none of your attendants wait without?”

“I am unattended,” replied Adolphus, “and I am not to be detained by the *evil spirit* which crosses my path.—I am in haste, reverend father,” added Adolphus sharply.

“Perhaps,”

“ Perhaps,” exclaimed the monk contemptuously, “ *you fear to stay!*”

“ Fear!” exclaimed Adolphus disdainfully, while he stopped and contemplated the strangely perturbed figure of the confessor. Rezzonico’s visage was paler than usual, and Adolphus imagined that his almost bloodless lips quivered with extraordinary emotion, while he essayed to speak. The sleek and composed exterior of the hypocrite was no longer discernible; his emotion was ungovernable and wild; the sudden start of nature’s own feelings characterized his expression; and his words seemed to come labouring and convulsive from the heart.

“ Oh! had I the tongue of one inspired! I could a tale unfold, that would pierce thy heart with remorse!”—exclaimed Rezzonico.

A thought shot across the mind of

F 2 Adolphus,

Adolphus, that this communication might relate to his father; he stopped and gave all his attention to the monk while he continued.

“ Oh judgment of God ! terrible
“ and dark ! that has fallen on thy
“ head—all thy prospects blasted in
“ thy prime ! — the rebellious son,
“ the heretic, the scoffer of God’s
“ true religion is now punished !—by
“ this judgment is the young de-
“ stroyer destroyed—and the Hugo-
“ not warrior is overthrown ! ”

“ To the purpose, good father,”
cried Adolphus, “ you seem to wan-
“ der from the mark.”

“ Did not your blood run cold,
“ and horror chill thy heart ? were
“ not thy limbs shaken with convul-
“ sive throes, and thy hair uplifted . .
“ did not thy soul...thy very nature
“ revolt at this most foul and unna-
“ tural crime ?— What alms — what
“ deeds

“ deeds of charity, and ages of repentance can wash thy sin away?”

“ What sin...what crime?” demanded Adolphus with astonishment.

“ Rash youth!” replied Rezzonico, approaching Adolphus, “ do you not remember when the hand of the trembling Edda was placed in thine, and a Lutheran priest mocked God’s holy rite? Where was thy good angel then?—where was thy God? —he who would have put forth his hand to save you, if you had not profaned his rites, and abandoned his faith—nay, even my warning voice you mocked and heeded not!”

“ Where will this end?” exclaimed Adolphus, who now became alarmed at the solemn manner and awful words of the monk. “ I am innocent and Edda.....”

“ Miscreant!” exclaimed Rezzonico, tossing his arms wildly in the air

and starting back, " she is thine own
" *sister ! !* "

A cold dew hung on the brow of Adolphus; he tottered towards one of the pillars of the abbey, against which he leaned nearly bereft of his senses. If the monk spoke the truth it was a horrible judgment !—a *curse* so dark and dreadful, that it almost unhinged his belief in the justice of Divine Providence. Rezzonico beheld his distress,—his soul's anguish, without the slightest feeling of commiseration for the sufferer, and the despair of Adolphus, which might have softened the hardest heart, served but to whet this demon in the infliction of greater suffering. He saw that the countenance of Adolphus assumed a calmer aspect—the throbs of bitter agony no longer convulsed his breast. Rezzonico read what was passing in his mind—Adolphus doubted the truth of the
" whole

whole statement ; he recollected that the monk had ever carried himself audaciously towards him, and always was his bitter foe—the tale might be the monk’s invention—in order to damn him here and hereafter, by prompting his soul to horrid deeds ; and familiarizing it with terrible crimes. He had already whispered to himself this consolation, when Rezzonico approached, and shouted in his ear, in a tone that rang among the ruins ;

“ I have *proofs* of the deed—*proofs*
 “ that will damn you—do not heed my
 “ assertion—give it no credit ; with-
 “ out I prove it clear as the light of
 “ day, I ask no mercy from Heaven !”

“ Oh horrible !” exclaimed Adolphus.

Rezzonico whispered to himself ;

“ ay, now it works ! he has that with-
 “ in him now, that banishes sleep and
 “ good thoughts for ever ! The worm

“ is preying on his heart—the worm
 “ that *never dies!* the sense of guilt,
 “ of *unpardonable crime*—oh! how he
 “ writhes!—he suffers the tortures of
 “ the damned!”

The mind of Adolphus had been subdued, and crushed beneath this terrible stroke; but the storm of passion was now rising in his bosom, and he gave way to the violent efforts of madness and despair. He suddenly sprang towards the astonished confessor, and grasping him around the throat, while he shook the trembling frame of the monk, he exclaimed,
 “ Monster! if thou dost not prove
 “ the truth of thy assertion, by every
 “ damning link of the chain of guilt;
 “ if thou dost not satisfy me with the
 “ terrible conviction—expect no mer-
 “ cy!”

“ Unhand me then, and grapple
 “ not thus rudely with my throat,”
 “ cried

cried, the terrified Rezzonico, "I cannot speak."

"What art thou?" cried Adolphus madly and still grasping him; "art thou not a villain, a dark designing hypocrite? Thou hast many times sought my life—and I have never injured thee.—It would have been mercy to have struck me to the heart . . . while I slept unconscious and ignorant of guilt, or to have ministered to me the same potion, which sent Mehnlos to his early grave! Hah! dost thou tremble? I know thee and thy terrible purpose, and yet I would not willingly deprive thee of life; but thou hast sought thine own doom—thou hast haunted me as a spirit of evil, and thou shalt consummate thy work, or I will send thy guilty soul among the howling damned."

"You will not murder me in the

“sanctuary,” cried Rezzonico, “spare
 “my life for thy father’s sake; for
 “I know, rash youth, that his life de-
 “pends upon the preservation of
 “mine!”

“’Tis well,” cried Adolphus, let-
 “ting go his hold of the monk; “that
 “name has saved thee for a time—
 “here I quit this gloomy world, which
 “has now become hateful and loath-
 “some to my soul, it is fitting that
 “I should perform an act of duty.
 “In my father’s service I shall
 “spend the few moments I can with-
 “hold from the contemplation of eter-
 “nity. Give me the proofs of my
 “crime, fell monster! and then lead
 “me to my father.”

A horn now sounded faintly at a
 distance. Adolphus was aware that it
 gave the signal, that the White Cross
 Knights were now assembled in coun-
 cil. It was necessary if he wished to
 attend

attend the council, to join them instantly.

“Where shall we meet again?” demanded Adolphus, “as I must now haste away for a time.”

“It is now,” replied Rezzonico, “past midnight; precisely at the hour of one you will find a monk performing penance, opposite the image of St. Eric, in a private chapel which lies near the great western aisle of the abbey.”

“I have marked the place,” observed Adolphus.

“Thither repair,” said Rezzonico, “and that penitent monk will conduct you to me.”

Rezzonico without waiting for the reply of Adolphus, quickly glided down the aisle, and often turned his head to observe if he was pursued. In a few minutes, Adolphus lost sight of

him behind one of the buttresses of the abbey.

“What if the monk do not return,” thought Adolphus; “if he holds out this appointment only to deceive me; if he leaves me to struggle with this lingering torture, this thorn, which he has implanted in my mind!—Oh God! that I had never beheld the light of day! or when the battle raged, and death in many shapes flew around me, why was I spared for this my hour of agony?—Oh! dark and unutterable crime!...”—The sense of his misfortunes had exhausted his soul; he gave to his grief neither sigh nor tear; he walked like one who wanders from his couch in his sleep, and lives in a guilty dream. He went forth from those dark ruins in utter despair and brokenness of heart. Once his eye
rested

rested on that heavy pile which rose in gloomy obscurity against the stars. He gazed with some degree of emotion on the savage wildness of this scene, which corresponded in its character with his fate; he traced the pale arches, which crossed the gloomy horrors of the interior, into a resemblance of the wild coinage of his brain; he imagined he beheld issuing from the ruins, and pursuing him on every side, demons of destruction, who impelled him forwards towards his evil destiny; and in the very frenzy of his misery he hugged the chain of wretchedness which had bound him.

Adolphus arrived in the mine at the breaking up of the council. His pale cheek and hurried step was unnoticed by the knights; he met with no kind greeting—no word of sympathy. Fanaticism and a gloomy spirit of religion had hardened their hearts, and
changed,

changed all the genial and mild virtues of the soul into one cold and forbidding substitute — the performance of what was commanded and prescribed as their duty. Adolphus possessed no friends among them; he passed silently and unwelcomed through the gloomy passages of the retreat. A considerable bustle was observable in the mine; the din of arms might be heard on every side, mingled with the loud and boisterous voices of the knights, many of whom having just returned from a successful expedition, were intoxicated, and quarrelling over the distribution of the spoil. Animated by the good fortune of their fellows, there was another expedition preparing to sally forth, and while they were busily caparisoning their neighing steeds, Adolphus observed Wildebrand visiting each soldier with a sedulous familiarity,

miliarity, and using every means to acquire popularity with the lowest of the order.

All these proceedings surprised Adolphus, and if his own sorrows would have allowed him to examine the passing events with greater accuracy, he would have discovered circumstances still more wonderful. The orders which Tigerhielm had given on his departure, that the knights should abstain from their marauding expeditions until his return, had not only been defeated through the intrigues of Wildebrand, but they were even made use of as an instrument for exciting rebellion against their chief. Wildebrand had never lost sight of his favourite objects—the ruin of Tigerhielm, and the discovery of Edda's retreat. Although the latter was not yet accomplished, yet he had very nearly succeeded in the first. He manoeuvred

manœuvred among the troops, and having acquired the good opinion of a few daring spirits, amongst whom were Otter and Ulfsax, he represented to them what he chose to denominate the selfish views of their leader, who wished to deprive his faithful troops of that plunder which during his absence he had no right to share. He even went further, and ventured to hint on the authority of a communication which he had received, that Tigerhielm was at that moment betraying them all into the hands of their irritated monarch, and receiving the price of his treason, while he might, no doubt, congratulate himself in having thus penned them up by his orders, until the moment arrived when they were to be led forth to slaughter. The troops would have instantly chosen Wildebrand for their leader, but his plots among the senior knights were
not

'not sufficiently ripe for execution; and when he refused the proffered command, he gained additional friends by this semblance of moderation. The senior knights were alarmed at the spirit which prevailed among the troops, and they were obliged to appease them by allowing them to proceed on their marauding expeditions against the Catholic Barons. Wildebrand often took the command in these expeditions; and from the want of caution and prudence of the commander, the ranks of the confederacy were thinned, and many valuable lives were lost. The cause which had originally assembled them together was now tarnished by criminal excesses, and the banners of the Most High, which they imperiously carried in their van, weré often polluted with innocent blood—with the blood of women and of children, whom these barbarians sacrific-
ed

ed out of mere wantonness in the spirit of cruelty and revenge. The king had in vain endeavoured to put an end to these outrages. The White Cross Knights were protected by the secrecy of their subterranean retreats, and by the depopulation of the country for many miles around it. The few peasants who remained in the vicinity of Riddarholmen, were so enthralled by the superstitions which from infancy they had attached to that dreadful name, that if they beheld the White Cross Knights issuing from that murky wood, they would have deemed them a troop of spirits who haunted that terrific place. It was to this popular superstition the knights were indebted in a great measure for their safety, although some of their dreadful crimes called aloud to Heaven for vengeance.

Wildebrand had given orders, in one of their expeditions, to set fire to an
• abbey,

abbey*, which had lately been endowed by the king, and which was inhabited by some nuns of the order of St. Ursula. The nuns were awakened in their cells by the tossing of the burning brands; and while these savages formed a circle round the abbey, and raised a yell like demons, the terrified nuns sought to escape through their ranks from the flames, but these hell-hounds tossed them back again into the fire, and drowned their cries by shouts of triumph. After waiting until the pile was consumed, they erected a simple cross on the ruins, with this inscription, *The Lutherans to their God!* Such were the nature of those excesses which Tigerhielm had deprecated, and in which Wildebrand indulged them.

The retired turret in which Adolphus had been confined by Tigerhielm, and which was the scene of that

* Vide Note at the end of the Volume

chief's secret studies, had been lately discovered by Wildebrand. His joy was unbounded, when he imagined that he had at length obtained an insight of the place where the precious secret of eternal life and unbounded wealth was deposited. The only inhabitant of this place was the wretched Laplander Hernulf. From this dumb creature he found it was impossible to obtain information, although he was convinced that this man had been selected by Tigerhielm on this very account, and he deemed himself already very fortunate in having procured the Laplander, who, no doubt, was an essential instrument in the making of gold. He possessed himself of the papers and different instruments which he found in the turret, although he was perfectly ignorant of their use. The strange characters of the manuscripts he could not understand, but he was confident

confident that they contained the *grand secret*; and with the assistance of Hernulf, and at his own leisure, he was convinced he should develop it. The dumb Laplander had exhibited the most excruciating distress at being forced away by Wildebrand, who committed him to one of the strongest cells in the prison. Wildebrand feared that even this might not hold him securely, for he suspected that Hernulf was a spirit raised by Tigerhielm's art, or one of those genii, whom severity and hard treatment only can compel to yield obedience to the orders of their master. The distress which Hernulf shewed on those occasions when Wildebrand visited him, no longer seemed to arise from any fears respecting his own safety. His dumb signs evidently pointed to some unknown cause, or object of distress; and he gave tokens of expiring from want of nourishment, when

when he was surrounded, by the orders of Wildebrand, with wine and food in profusion. This extraordinary conduct Wildebrand could not account for, but he was determined to use the utmost severity towards this miserable captive, if he continued much longer in this state of obstinacy.

By his influence among the knights, which had been increased by the causes we have mentioned, Wildebrand had procured the condemnation of the Count Magnus Mörner at the council which was held on this very evening. His principal object in doing so was to drive his rival to some desperate action, which might end in his destruction—to urge him on to parricide, or to expose him in his turn to the avenging steel of the White Cross Knights.

The confessor had not yet succeeded in sharing the full confidence of Wildebrand; he knew that there was something which laboured in his breast,
and

and which he was desirous to conceal, and he moved heaven and earth in order to possess himself of it; but Wildebrand, while he planned a retreat through the influence of Rezzonico, in case of the downfall of the order, paused 'ere he committed himself by so precipitate a step. The confessor had never forgotten the little cross which Edda, the reputed daughter of the Count de Beaumarchais, wore round her neck at the time that he conveyed her to the hermit Paul. It contained a remarkable amulet, and was worn by the child from her birth; his surprise was extreme when he recognized this cross on the bosom of Edda on the night of her marriage. The sight of the cross, the name which he heard pronounced by Adolphus, and the expression of her face, which resembled the infantine sweetness of that child whom he had devoted to destruction,

fully

fully proved to him that the hermit Paul had failed in performing his duty, and that the child whose death he had once regretted now stood before him. From the papers which Rezzonico had found in the iron box which he discovered in the ruins of St. Blois, he was certain that Edda was not the offspring of the Count and Countess de Beaumarchais: he then regretted her death as an useless sacrifice; but he was struck with horror when on giving these papers a minuter examination, he found there was every reason to conclude that *she was the sister of Adolphus*. He endeavoured to prevent their marriage by awing their minds with his warning voice, to which the superstitious influence of the place added additional terror; but, his real object at that time was to do a grateful service to Wildebrand, with whose attachment he was acquainted, and it

was

was not until a short time after that he found that he might artfully attribute to higher motives the cause of his interference.

The terrible denunciation against his father met the frenzied eye of Adolphus as he ascended the steps which led from the terrible tribunal. It was affixed to a white cross which was elevated in the centre of the cross-ways which led to the apartments of the knights. On the top of this cross was placed a human skull, from which the White Cross Knights drank to the terrible fate of him whom by this form they condemned to immediate death. Through the name of the condemned was thrust a dagger, thus intimating to the confederates that from that moment he became exposed to their avenging steel; and while Adolphus gazed upon this terrible sentence, he was reminded of the *awful oath* which

he had taken, and which commanded him, in spite of the curdling of his blood, to outrage the most solemn of nature's ties, and raise a parricidal arm against a father's life. The horrors which had accumulated on his head through this eventful night seemed now to have reached the utmost extent of human endurance. He moved onward to keep his appointment with the monk, and he then wished to leave this fatal place for ever. The forms who thronged around him, or who eyed him as he passed, wore scarcely the semblance of human beings—they resembled the fabled demons who torture the damned, and to his terror-coining eye their hands appeared to be red with human blood. He gathered his cloak around his face, and sought to conceal the fatal devices of his name, which emblazoned his armour. He wished to elude the
obser-

observation of the White Cross Knights, and he lowered his vizor more than once when the busy groups peeped out upon him from their dark cells as he stole quietly along. But there was one who watched him and followed him at a distance, whom Adolphus did not perceive, and whose observation he could not elude. As he passed through the arched door of the mine, which was always kept closed and watched from within by a single sentinel, he heard the clock of Riddarholmen strike one, which was the hour he had appointed to meet Rezzonico. The sentinel, while he lowered his harquebuss to Adolphus as he passed, muttered a prayer for his success on the expedition, as he took him for the leader of a troop that was going forth to pillage. Adolphus felt for a moment softened and affected at the thought that he should have obtained

the good wishes and prayers of any human being, and he felt it with double force at such a time ; but he could not help reflecting on the strange contradictions of human nature. “ Can “ this man pray ? ” thought Adolphus, “ aye, and murder while he prays. “ Such prayers never ascend to heaven ! ” Adolphus proceeded to the ruins of the abbey, which were, as usual, silent and deserted. The moon now emerged from some dark clouds and shone with full splendour on the scene : he was guided by her light to the ruined chapel designated by the statue of St. Eric. Not finding the monk here, he was about to accuse Rezzonico of deceit, when he perceived something moving in the dark shadow of the pillars, which the moon stretched across the white pavement. He conjectured that it might be the monk performing penance : he approached

proached the place, and found it was Rezzonico himself. Adolphus was about to address him, but Rezzonico placing his finger on his lips in token of silence, moved onward through the abbey. The confessor frequently stopped and looked anxiously around him, and Adolphus never saw him exhibit such signs of fear. When they quitted the abbey they crossed a court which was covered with the fragments of a magnificent fretted roof, which had fallen in and strewed the ground with its remains. On the opposite side of the court stood a row of small arcades, which remained nearly uninjured by decay, and had formerly been connected with the cloisters of the abbey. There was a ruined portal in the centre of them which communicated with an adjoining court, whose buildings time having levelled with the ground, the surrounding country and

part of the woods of Riddarhöjmen were visible through the lofty arch of the entrance. When they stood in the open air, Rezzonico at length broke silence, but with the air of a man who talks to himself.

“ I have this night observed strange
“ sights! Dark portents are abroad!
“ I fear we are observed! Have you,
“ my lord,” said the confessor, addressing Adolphus, “ ever heard that
“ banditti lurk in these ruins?”

Adolphus was about to reply, when Rezzonico laying his hand emphatically on his arm, pointed to the arch of the portal: “ Do you not observe,” said he in an under tone, “ that stirring shadow on the ground? It
“ cannot be projected by yon waving
“ pine?”

Adolphus saw distinctly what appeared to be the shadow of a man on the distant path; but ere he spoke,
he

he heard the sound of horses hoofs, and presently appeared a troop of the White Cross Knights at a distance, which seemed suddenly to issue from the bowels of the earth. The haughty priest, appalled and terrified, viewed this ghastly vision, as he deemed it, passing onward in the light of the moon—their bright armour and white mantles gleamed like the ghastliness of spirits, while the hard congealed snow, which flew in clouds from their horses feet, appeared to be part of the vapour which formed their airy shapes.

Rezzonico crossed himself several times fervently. “Guard us from
“evil! God of Hosts avert from us
“this omen!” ejaculated Rezzonico; and while he spoke the sombre foliage of the forest, through which they now gallopped, concealed them from his view, and to his eye they appeared to vanish in the dark wood. “’Tis
“gone,”

“ gone,” said Rezzonico, “ and leaves
“ not a trace behind !”

Adolphus, who was too much absorbed in his own sufferings to heed the terrors of the monk, and who had more than once endeavoured to hurry him forward, now bespught him to use more dispatch. Rezzonico smiled in bitter scorn on Adolphus, and he scowled on him as he stalked onward towards the arcades. The monk tapped gently on a small door which opened into the buildings which they shaded. After a small delay, it was opened by a monk of the Franciscan order, who without speaking doubly locked the door by which they had entered, and proceeded down a passage which opened on each side to the cells of the monks, bearing before them an iron lamp. At any other time this circumstance of barring all possibility of his escape, particularly as it was strengthened

strengthened by the peculiar meaning visible in the eyes of Rezzonico, would have excited the suspicions of Adolphus. He now gave little attention to what passed around him, and he imprudently placed himself in the power of his deadly enemy, without having taken the smallest precaution for his own personal safety. When they arrived at the door of a cell situated at the end of the corridore, the Franciscan made an obeisance to Rezzonico and retired. Adolphus now found himself alone with Rezzonico in the abbot's cell, which was lighted by a lamp that burned before an image of the Virgin. Rezzonico brought forth the iron box which he had found in the ruins of St. Blois and took out of it some papers which he placed on the table before Adolphus, and bade him read.

While Adolphus perused them the

monk watched the changes of his countenance with an observing eye, and when he beheld the manuscripts fall from the almost lifeless hand of Adolphus, his countenance expressed the triumph of a demon. He again enjoyed, what to his dark revengeful mind was exquisitely sweet, the suffering of this unfortunate young nobleman; and when he beheld the paleness of death settling on that countenance, which the dark shade of his steel morion rendered still more ghastly, he already triumphed in the certainty of possessing those rich estates which the death of Adolphus would secure to him.

To Adolphus there appeared to be no doubt of the extent of his misfortune. He could not be deceived in the authenticity of these documents, which were in the hand writing of the Counts of Mörner and de Beaumar-
chais

chais, and sealed with their private signets. The assertion of Rezzonico was supported by expressions contained in these letters which passed between the Counts at the time of the birth of Edda, who was placed by Count Mörner under the protection of her maternal uncle, soon after her birth. The Countess Marcellina, it appeared, had lost her only child an infant daughter, shortly after its birth, about this very time, and the Count de Beaumarchais, actuated by the tenderest feelings towards the Countess, and expecting that her heart would naturally expand from the exertion of a mother's feelings, substituted the little Edda, his newly arrived niece, for the deceased child. The Countess, whose delicate state of health did not allow her to be made acquainted with her loss, received the infant as her own, and was never made acquainted

G 6

with

with the deception which was practised upon her. Rezzonico had, therefore, never any suspicion of Edda's real father, until he perused these papers. But it must be remarked that Adolphus was in too great agony of mind to observe that this important fact rested solely on the *belief* of the Counts of Mörner and De Beaumarchais.

After a painful pause, Adolphus started up, and striking his forehead wildly, he exclaimed, "lead me to my father—and *then*!—" He wished to subdue the expression of his feelings: he paced the cell in wild disorder; but Rezzonico, 'ere he complied with the wishes of Adolphus, stopped for some minutes, and paid his devotions before the image of the Virgin. He rose meekly, and approaching Adolphus, he said, "ob-
" serve the comfort which our holy
" religion

“ religion bestows upon its votaries!
“ abjure thy heresy—bow before that
“ sacred image of the blessed Virgin,
“ and perhaps. . . .”

The monk paused. Adolphus heeded not his words—he replied not; but by his gesture he seemed to repulse his demand, or rather to intreat his forbearance in such an hour of calamity. The expression of Rezzonico’s features again assumed the cast of bitter hatred, and he exclaimed, “ proceed in thy guilty course, thou
“ abandoned of God thou *cursed*,
“ thou lost for ever !”

“ Prithee! lead on,” cried Adolphus, “ or else my mind is bound up
“ to do some terrible feat.”

“ It shall be accomplished,” said Rezzonico aloud,—“ and now,” whispered the monk to himself: “ if he has
“ any feelings left, I’ll torture them !
“ I’ll harrow up his inmost soul !”

Rezzonico

Rezzonico led the way, and the same Franciscan attended them down the corridore. The door was unlocked, and they proceeded in silence along the pavement under the arcades. When they passed under the ruined portal, they distinctly saw a retreating shadow, passing along the cloister ruins. They had not time to observe this object, 'ere a low and indistinct moan reached their ears, which appeared to proceed from the ground underneath their feet. Rezzonico was startled at this sound, and while he stopped to examine the adjoining ruins, Adolphus listened and almost hoped to hear another. For he deemed it the prophetic warning which told him to prepare for another world. He believed in that ancient superstition, which teaches us to expect the death-voice calling in the awful hour preceding our end ; and as he now despaired

paired of happiness in this world, he looked forward with hope to another. They moved onward without hearing it again, or finding any cause to create suspicion ; but Adolphus marked the spot, in order that he might know it again, if ever he lived to visit it. They now proceeded at a rapid pace, through an avenue of the woods of Riddarholmen, which Adolphus never before visited. They had passed beyond the confines of Riddarholmen 'ere morning appeared. The red orb of the sun had now risen ; but his image, shorn of its glory and obscured by a thick mist, appeared to usher in a gloomy day. Their figures were scarcely tinted by its light, 'ere Rezzonico stopped at the entrance of a pit, from whence a heavy and sulphurous vapour issued, which almost impeded their respiration. " We must descend here," said Rezzonico to Adolphus, at the same time

time he called out loudly to those who were at the bottom of the pit.

“Whither do you lead me?” demanded Adolphus.

“You shall see anon,” replied Rezzonico; “but here we *must* descend,” added he in a more peremptory tone.

Several figures now approached them, who were habited in black and noisome dresses; their haggard and wan looks proclaimed their occupation. They were miners who laboured in the copper mine beneath them, into which they now assisted Adolphus and Rezzonico to descend. The way was perilous and dismal, and the offensive vapour exhaled in such thick clouds that it threatened to extinguish their torches. When they reached the bottom of the mine Rezzonico dismissed their conductors, and he and Adolphus entered a gallery leading from the principal

principal shaft. His eyes appeared to be in quest of some object, and he examined the recesses on each side of their path with minute attention. At length he stopped, and grasping Adolphus by the arm, he pointed to a man who sate in a recess of the rock at some little distance from them, and exclaimed "*there he is!*"

Adolphus looked the way he pointed, and beheld a wretched man whose figure was scarce discernible by the light of a small torch which was stuck in the rock. His dress was that of a common miner, and he had apparently been working with great labour and exertion, for his massy iron hammer rested by his side against the rock which he had been breaking, and large drops of perspiration stood thick upon his brow. His face, was white and ghastly, and round his eyes was marked a livid circle which denoted disease.

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He appeared to be almost starving, and he took from a cleft in the rock a piece of hard and moulded crust off which he brake a small piece, and, 'ere he put it to his mouth, he raised his eyes involuntarily to heaven, as though he would give thanks for his humble food, but goaded by some feeling which appeared to be working internally, he suddenly dropped them in despair upon the ground. When he had eaten of his crust he carefully lapped up what remained and held it in his hand, viewing it with the eye of a miser who imagines he has squandered too much of his precious treasure.

Merciful Heaven, what were the sensations of Adolphus when he recognized in this miserable outcast of society, *his own father?* His feelings were too acute to permit him at once to declare himself and press his parent
to

to his bosom. While he stood thrilled with horror the monk gazed on them with an hardened look, and he seemed to derive some satisfaction from a scene which he had previously planned and contemplated in his mind's eye. While they stood unobserved by the miserable Count, they heard him break forth into the following soliloquy, after he had seated himself upon a piece of ore to rest awhile from his labour.

“ Another day is past ! another day
“ of misery ! I know it by the tread
“ of friendly feet, which, at the hour
“ of day-break visit my companions—
“ but I I have no wife, no
“ children, to press me in their arms,
“ and bring me food. Nay, perhaps
“ even now they curse me,—curse
“ him who gave them being.—’Tis
“ horrible ! But they owe no
“ attention to a father whose actions
“ have divested him of that name.—

“ And

“ And now, by the dint of severe
“ labour which is shortening my ex-
“ istence, I earn this poor pittance,
“ my only comforter, this moulded
“ crust, which is softened with my
“ burning tears!—but here at least I
“ may breathe in peace. Who
“ would seek in this rough garb
“ Mörner? the illustrious. . . . the
“ once proud and rich? My visions
“ here too are not so much disturbed
“ by horrid images; and on this hard
“ ground I can sometimes sleep. My
“ guilty countenance proclaims me a
“ murderer in the light of day; but
“ here. I am no longer pursued.
“ —I have escaped a horrid death.—
“ How it freezes my blood to think
“ of that slow and gradual mutilation
“ of limb—the preservation of life
“ and of sense, in order to witness the
“ destruction of each member, and
“ the burning of each quivering and
“ sensitive

“ sensitive entrail! — Oh God! oh
“ God! fear shakes me when I think
“ of the punishment of *fratricide*!”

The Count appeared to be so much agitated with the fears his fancy conjured up, that he paused and looked round him, with *breathless anxiety. His eyes now rested on their strange figures, which he could barely discern in the gloom which surrounded them; but fear caused his limbs to tremble, and with a frenzied look he started back into the recess, where crouching under the rock and drawing the flap of his coarse hat over his eyes, he hoped to escape observation.

At this moment some one passed quickly behind Adolphus, and whispered: “ remember the *oath of a*
“ *White Cross Knight*!—the man in
“ yonder cave is condemned—your
“ poignard must drink his blood!”

Adolphus, in turning round, endeavoured

deavoured to seize the stranger, but he was gone, and the gallery was so exceeding dark that he could not even trace his form.

Adolphus shuddered at the fatal extremity to which he was exposed. His mind had become so confused in the events of the night, that he had forgotten the condemnation of his father, by that terrible decree of the White Cross Knights. The dreadful consequences of his perjury stood before him in all their horror ; but filial affection bore down every obstacle, and he felt that, even in the presence of their terrible tribunal, he would fly into his father's arms unappalled, and save his life at the expense of his own.

Adolphus drew near the Count and exclaimed, " rise up, my father, rise from the cold ground, for I bring you good tidings."

Rezzonico, who dreaded lest the Count

Count should hear any further explanation from his son; and deeming the present time ripe for his purpose, gave a private signal which was observed by Adolphus. The Count had risen from the ground and stared at Adolphus with the incredulity of a man who fears deceit in all who approached him. At this moment four men habited as miners rushed in upon him, and throwing aside their disguise, displayed the uniform of the king's harquebussiers, and one of them stepping forward seized on the terrified Count, and proclaimed in a loud voice, that they arrested him in the king's name for *murder*.

“ He lives ! he lives ! ” exclaimed Adolphus, “ that brother of whose death the Count is falsely accused. “ I have a witness who can prove my “ assertion to be true.”

The guards looked sternly on Adolphus,

phus, for interrupting them in the performance of their duty, and these words of consolation were lost to the Count; for he had fallen senseless on the ground and heard them not. Two of the guards bore him senseless as he was in their arms from the gallery, and Adolphus, regardless alike of prudence and his own safety, upbraided Rezzonico with this foul and premeditated treachery. He would have torn the monk to pieces, but the two guards who remained held him at bay. The eyes of Rezzonico sparkled with fury, "we shall muzzle this foul-mouthed cur," he exclaimed; then turning to the guards, "behold your warrant for arresting Adolphus, the son of the Count of Mörner, 'tis in the king's name I deliver it to you; he is accused of high crimes and misdemeanors; and among others the dark sin of *incest* is laid to his charge.

“ charge. Look to your prisoner, and
“ your lives lie answerable for his
“ safety ! ”

Adolphus was instantly seized by the guards ; astonishment and indignation at this double treachery rendered him incapable of resisting them. Rezzonico, 'ere they bore Adolphus from the mine, turned on him and gave him one look 'ere they parted ; but such a look as baffles all attempts to convey its portrait : there was a complicated expression of hatred, joy, contempt, and triumph, mingled in that look of bitter scorn, which told Adolphus he could look forward to no hopes of mercy.

The monk now descended along the gallery, and mingled with the group, who were conveying Count Magnus Mörner through one passage of the mine, while Adolphus was forced by his guards to ascend by another. Their

horses were waiting at the mouth of the mine, and having tied Adolphus to the saddle bows of a spare horse, they proceeded to cross the country in the direction of Riddarholmen.

CHAP. XV.

Think my former state a happy dream,
 From which awak'd the truth of what we are,
 Shows us but this—I am sworn brother now
 To grim necessity, and he and I
 Will keep a league till death. SHAKESPEARE.

Cæcumque domûs seclûs omne retextit. VIRGIL.

ADOLPHUS could obtain from his guards no intelligence of the place to which they were conveying him. He understood from them that they had a long journey to perform; but further than this they did not choose to inform him. These men seemed to be quite ignorant of the country they were travelling through, and from what Adolphus could learn from their conversation, which principally turned on

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the subject of those terrible White Cross Knights who had baffled all the King's attempts to destroy them, they belonged to some force which had been lately ordered to scour that part of the country. It was evident that these men entertained the same opinion of the supernatural power of the White Cross Knights as that which prevailed among the peasantry, and Adolphus felt convinced that if one of them appeared in the full accoutrements of his order, it would be sufficient to put these heroes to flight ; but he could indulge no hopes of such an interference in his favour, as the knights never quitted the precincts of Riddarholmen by day, and never wore the dress of their order but at the hour they went forth on their midnight expeditions ; and at this time Adolphus and his guards would in all probability be at a considerable distance from
Rid -

Riddarholmen. The soldiers were frequently obliged to ask the peasants whom they met to direct them ; but they now appeared in a considerable dilemma, for they stood in a place where four roads met, in a wild-part of the country, which was overgrown by low brushwood and scattered pines, which stood on the edges of the great forest of Riddarholmen. After a long dispute, they at length made choice of one of them which led down a little wooded steep. While they rode along this way, Adolphus perceived one of the men fall suddenly on his saddle-bow without a groan. Astonished at this event, he thought at first that the man was overpowered by sleep and fatigue ; but the trickling of a stream of blood down his horse's flank undeceived him. At that moment his companion beheld his situation, and looking fearfully behind him, exclaimed,

“ Ha! . . a cross-bow and a *White Cross Knight* !” instantly galloped down the hill, leaving Adolphus in the power of his pursuer. The stranger rode up beside Adolphus, and he found that he owed his life once more to the faithful Conrad.

Conrad unbound Adolphus and gave him the arms of the guard who had fallen on the road and was now quite dead. They turned their horses towards Riddarholmen, and while they rode leisurely, Conrad informed Adolphus that he had witnessed his melancholy situation when he beheld him on the preceding night passing from the tribunal of the knights, and he determined, in case any misfortune impended over him, that he would be at hand to assist and defend him. With this intention he followed him to the cloisters, where he lay in wait for Adolphus, and it was his shadow which

which gave so much alarm to Rezzonico. Conrad, while he lay in wait among the ruins, had been startled by the groans which were noticed by Adolphus and Rezzonico. While he was seeking for the cause of them, Rezzonico and Adolphus pursued their way, and Conrad having now lost all traces of them, was obliged to give up all hopes of carrying his kind intention into effect; he still, however, wandered round the confines of Riddarholmen, without daring to emerge from that dark wood, for fear of being discovered by the peasants, and at length to his infinite joy he descried the object of his search.

When he discovered that Adolphus was in custody, he followed them for some time at a distance, in order to wait for a favourable opportunity of attacking his escort. He seized the first that presented itself, and using

his cross-bow, in order to prevent an alarm, he sped the fatal shaft with accurate aim through the body of the soldier.

While Adolphus pondered on his desperate situation, he communicated to Conrad his resolution to proceed to the ruins of the cloister, in order to investigate the mystery which alarmed them. But the real cause of his having taken this resolution was the likelihood of their affording him a retreat, and his heart shrunk from communicating to Conrad the reason which prevented him from seeking his wonted residence in the secret apartments which Edda occupied in the castle. From the vicinity of the ruins to that part of the cloister inhabited by the Franciscans, he might be enabled to procure some intelligence of his father, and of the extent of the sanguinary intentions of Rezzonico. The short span of a winter's day was already
ready

ready closing round them when they arrived at Riddarholmen, and while Conrad led their horses towards the stables of the knights in the depth of the mine, in order to prevent discovery, Adolphus wandered among the foundations of the ruins, near the spot from whence he had heard the sound proceed. After listening for a few minutes he imagined he heard them again; but it was so faint a sound that he thought it was the wind sighing through the deep vaults which lay beneath the ruins. He heard it again more distinctly; and as he passed along a grated window which was in the end of a vault, he imagined he heard the sounds proceeding from within. He called out and demanded if any human creature was immured there? The moans which he had heard audibly before now suddenly ceased

After a pause, a voice from within cried faintly, "is that the foot of
" 'Hernulf?—art thou come to feed
" me, good Hernulf? If you have a
" heart, let me die any death but that
" of hunger!"

Adolphus was struck with the idea that this was some wretched captive confined by the knights, and placed under the care of Hernulf. After examining the place, he could discover no inlet, until his foot happened to strike against an iron ring, which was fastened to a stone in the top of the vault. When by the exertion of his strength he had removed this stone from its place, he found some steps leading into the body of the vault. When Adolphus had descended, he could discern no object within, for the faint rays of twilight could not penetrate the gloom of this dismal dungeon.

He

He called out ~~once~~ more to the unhappy being whose voice he had heard through the grating.

After a pause, the same voice cried out, "give me some water to quench
" this intolerable thirst!"

"Who art thou?" demanded Adolphus.

"A miserable man!" replied the voice, "give me some food for charity, or I die!"

"Wretched being! what is thy name?"

"I have none," replied the voice,
"I have forgot my name, and all
" things of that blessed time; though
" sometimes I dream that the sun
" shines on me, and men call me
" *Prince*—though here they call me
" *misery*!"

"Alas!" thought Adolphus, "he is
" not in his right mind."

The sound of steps above his head

■ 6 announced

announced the approach of Conrad. Adolphus called upon him from the vault, and Conrad descended with a torch, which he now kindled. By its light they perceived that they stood in a gloomy vault of much larger extent than they at first imagined. They discovered upon one side the remains of an immense rack, and various bolts to secure the sufferers, and many instruments of torture lay strewed upon the floor. But what attracted all their attention, and filled them with inexpressible horror, was the appearance of the unhappy captive, who was lying weak and faint, at the bottom of a large iron cage, which was suspended from the roof at one end of the vault. He was, apparently, dying; and appeared so exhausted with the conversation he had held with Adolphus, that he could no longer convey his meaning but by signs.

Moved

Moved at this picture of misery, Adolphus dispatched Conrad for some provisions and cordials, while he stuck the torch near the cage, and contemplated the wretched captive. His age appeared to be very great; his eyes had lost their fire, and his silver beard descended low upon his breast: his nails had grown long and crooked like the talons of a raven, and through his tattered robe, his sharp bones struck their prominent joints. This miserable man brought to the recollection of Adolphus, the memorandums which he had found in the cell of the cloister-prisons, and he almost persuaded himself that this was the very captive who had written them.

“Henceforth,” thought Adolphus, “with *misery* will I dwell, and here will I lie beside my companion in misfortune. What crime can this wretch have committed to deserve
“ this

" this punishment? How horrible is
 " this refinement of cruelty! The
 " boards of his prison are worn with
 " his knees, and frequent tread!—how
 " closely we are attached to existence,
 " when this poor wretch husbands it,
 " and dares not dash himself to atoms
 " against the bars of his prison!—But
 " his fate is happiness compared to
 " mine!—habit has reconciled him to
 " his sufferings. The sun of yester-
 " day did not shine upon him; nor is
 " his darkness made more intolerable
 " by the comparison. Dark is my fate!
 " and utterly remediless!—there is no
 " human being, no power on this earth
 " can give me back the happiness I
 " have lost!—the happiness of yester-
 " day! Oh God! give me strength
 " to bear my misfortunes, and forti-
 " tude to die not unworthily!"

Overpowered by his evil destiny,
 and sinking under the load of his sor-
 row,

row, the wretched Adolphus felt his brain burning with the dark thoughts and dreadful purposes which rushed upon it. He stood by the little grated window, through which the cool air of the evening fanned him, and chased away the burning drops which stood upon his brow. While he leaned against the bars, he heard a voice calling upon him, fearfully, and in a low tone, as if it feared to be overheard. It was Conrad's voice calling him through the opening at the top of the vault.

"I will come to thee, good Conrad," replied Adolphus.

"Oh! my lord, approach me not, or I must fly!" exclaimed Conrad in terror, "even now, perhaps, I break my oath for love of thee!

"I do not comprehend you," exclaimed Adolphus, approaching him, "and I hear but indistinctly."

"If

“ If you approach, my lord, I am
“ damned for ever! for I cannot kill
“ thee!”

“ Hah !” exclaimed Adolphus.

“ Thou art condemned by our tri-
“ bunal, for having broken thy oath,”
cried Conrad. “ Oh God ! I heard
“ the fatal sound, when they drank
“ from the cup of blood ! Some
“ strange confusion rages among the
“ White Cross Knights, and I stole
“ out unobserved to give you warn-
“ ing : you must instantly fly this
“ place, and I will succour the pri-
“ soner below. You were observed
“ returning by one of Wildebrand’s
“ party, and hither they are coming
“ in search of you. I have brought
“ a peasant’s dress, which was part of
“ my last plunder ; it will serve to
“ disguise you—fly !—O God ! they
“ are coming !”

Adolphus ascended the steps of
the

the vault in haste, and looked on every side without exposing himself to observation; but the only sound he heard was the retreating steps of Conrad. The terrible denunciation which the White Cross Knights had issued against him, drove him from the mansion of his forefathers, and he hastened to depart, in order that Conrad might the sooner give assistance to the unhappy captive.

Adolphus now called to mind the warning which had been given in the copper mine; and he concluded that some of Wildebrand's party had traced him thither unobserved, and had given testimony against him. 'Ere he departed, he threw his helmet down into the vault, and covered his head with the coarse peasant's cap, and over his cuirass he threw their common garment, and thus disguised, he quitted the ruins of the abbey, and darted into the

the thickest part of the wood. His span of existence he now looked upon as nearly closed, and his dark day was sinking fast into the tide of eternity. How delusive the whole scene of human existence appeared to him! He pondered on the strange destiny of man; and with a rapid glance he viewed his past life. How few the moments of enjoyment! how fleeting too! like a few transitory sunbeams shooting athwart the clouded horizon of his youth. His soul was rendered more gloomy by the retrospect! and once the dark towers of Riddarholmen met his eye, from which he turned with involuntary horror. He passed the avenues of Riddarholmen in safety, and took the road leading to the little hamlet of Nerlunda.

The hour at which the knights usually went abroad had not yet arrived, and Adolphus felt a hope of procuring
some

some friendly roof, which might conceal him from their vengeance. The hamlet was still, and the village hinds were buried in sleep. There was nothing good to be seen abroad at such an hour, and Adolphus feared his garb of misery would prejudice the good peasants against him. He determined, however, to knock and demand an asylum; for the night was sullen, and the wind blew piercing cold. He knocked, with a trembling hand, against a cottage door. An aged female thrust her head from a casement and bade him begone, in a rude voice, as she never housed a needy beggar. Adolphus remonstrated, but the woman was inflexible, and closed the casement in anger. In other places he met with the same repulse; and some even threatened to loose their dogs, who guarded their cattle from the
the

the wolves, if he passed not onward from their door.

Adolphus walked on in despair and tried as a last hope the remotest cottage in the village. He pleaded his wretchedness to an aged man whom his knoek had brought to a window of the cottage. "I am miserable and hungry," said Adolphus, "do not, therefore, turn me from your door at such an hour as this."

"God wot," cried the hind, "I never did it yet, and I shall not learn to be hard-hearted in my old age; an thou be honest, I will let thee in!"

The peasant struck a light and came down to open the door; but he had no sooner beheld the face of Adolphus than he started back, and his countenance shewed evident marks of astonishment and horror.

"Thou art some murderer," said
the

the peasant; “your face is blanched
“ with guilt—I will not harbour thee.
“ Stay! I recollect thee now....I
“ have seen thee in other garbs—say,
“ art thou not a *Mörner*?—a name
“ which here we never pronounce
“ without horror!”

“ Alas! alas!” exclaimed Adolphus,
“ you speak the truth. I am one of
“ that unhappy race. Not....guilty,”
he was about to say, but his cheeks
burned with shame and his tears
choaked him. He could only add,
“ I am in the utmost need.”

The peasant looked at him for a few
minutes as if in doubt what to do; at
last he said, “ this is an innocent roof
“ —I have prospered under it, and so
“ have my father and grandfather be-
“ fore me—I believe it never harbour-
“ ed a guilty thing, or witnessed a
“ guilty deed. Art thou not *accurs-*
“ *ed*? has not heaven blasted thy fa-
“ ther’s

“ther’s prosperity, and burned his castle and consumed his flocks and herds?—No, no, I will not bring a judgment on my cottage by standing in the way of heaven’s decree, which says, *thou shalt suffer for the sins of thy fathers!*”

Adolphus looked up once more and implored his compassion but for one night. “No, no,” cried the peasant, “it cannot be; wert thou a starving beggar, loathsome and covered with disease, I would wash thy sores, feed thee, and shelter thee; but a *Mürner!* Oh! no, I cannot harbour the accursed of God! . . . a *Mürner!* . . . Young man, I cannot let you pass my threshold—in God’s name speed onward.”

So saying the old peasant closed the door in the face of Adolphus and retired to his bed. The heart-broken Adolphus moved onward. He had found

found a denial of the common charity which even a miserable beggar might claim. He had not where to lay his head, and in such a night as this he was turned forth to the merciless elements—his fellow man had denied him help, and had refused to save him from destruction. Adolphus felt a curse rising up from the bottom of his heart against all mankind when he reflected on their hardness of heart ; but he checked it, and endeavoured to banish the passion of misanthropy, which was laying hold of his mind. He descended from the inhospitable hamlet to the borders of the lake : his gait was agitated and unequal ; sometimes he ran, then, stopped by the opposing branches, he would muse for hours, leaning against the trunk of a lofty pine. He turned away from the habitations of beings formed like himself, and he avoided the sight of man.

The

The young peasants, when they beheld his distracted air, his wild and haggard look, ran away scared at his approach. He subsisted for some time on the hard winter berries he found in the clefts of the rocks or scattered in the woods which hung over the lake ; but even this was a precarious supply, and he was often driven to support nature by chewing the bitter bark of the pine. His shelter by night was the cleft of some decayed tree or a cavity in the rocky cliffs, from whence with a fire-brand he scared the wolves who roamed in that hour abroad. Sleep seldom visited him, and when it did it mocked his wishes for repose ; for in his dreams he lived again in misery, and suffered all his pains anew. The smiling image of Edda would rise before him, glowing and fresh from her rosy slumber. She would part the dark curls which clustered on his forehead,

head, kiss his burning cheek, and wake him by the name of *husband*! Horror-struck at that name, even in his vision his teeth would gnash together—his brow would grow moist with the dew of fear—his hands would grapple with each other and tear his palpitating flesh with unsightly gashes, denoting some terrible shock of nature. His constitution sunk beneath these mental and bodily sufferings. He felt ill, very ill—the hand of death was upon him—yet a wish, a faint wish, to feel the warm hand of a human being, even the hand of the lowest of his fellow creatures, press his own in his last hour, now rose within him. He felt an inward dread, a creeping horror steal upon him at the thoughts of dying far from the dwelling of man, and at leaving his unguarded remains to be devoured by the wolves and bears who prowled

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through the woods. He^t summoned up resolution and exerted the little strength which remained to him in descending to the shores of the lake. It was late in the evening when he crossed its sandy beach, and it was the last effort of which his strength was capable. His head grew giddy, and overcome with weakness, he fell upon the ground at the door of a cottage. He had not strength to give a signal to those within—his hand was upon the latch, but he was unable to raise it; and a feeble cry was all the expression of distress he was able to utter. But 'ere he fell powerless, there was a consolation imparted to his heart; he thought he recognized the place—it was associated with ideas of pleasure and of kindness, which affected him even to tears; but yet in the very weakness of his brain, in a mind dissolved by sickness, he could
summon

summon up no clear ideas of the cause of this emotion. The noise occasioned by his fall against the threshold, aroused an aged cottager and his wife, who came forth from the cottage with lights. The old cottager, surprised at seeing the body of a man lying at his door, turned the face upward to give it air, if indeed a spark of life remained, "Cross of Christ!" exclaimed the woman when she beheld some devices on his armour which she viewed underneath the ragged peasant's dress, "it is surely a *White Cross Knight!*"

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed the peasant, "what do I see? all powerful God!—it is the young Count of Mörner!"

Adolphus raised his eyes at the sound of that voice; it was the good Axel Olof and his wife, Ulrica!—Pleasure beamed on the pale countenance

of Adolphus the moment he recognized them, “and wilt thou receive a
“ Count of Mörner within thy door?
“ the enemy of our house and we your
“ bitter foes, say, Axel, wilt thou not
“ spurn me from thy threshold? the
“ *accursed* of God and the descendant
“ of the man, who brought woe and
“ lamentation upon your wife’s ances-
“ tor—say, Axel, wilt thou not leave
“ me to perish? and drive away in
“ scorn and anger the unblessed
“ head?”

“ Forbid it, Heaven,” cried Axel,
“ the God I serve is a God of mercy
“ —then how should I have hopes of
“ mercy hereafter, if I did not extend
“ to you his *greatest attribute*?”

“ Prithee cease,” cried the good
Ulrica—“ while you stand chattering
“ here, the young Count is lying in
“ the cold night air—bear him in I
“ say;

“ say ; bear him in to our warm
“ hearth.”

Adolphus, by the assistance of Axel, was able to rise and enter their hospitable cottage, where we shall leave him in the care of these hospitable peasants, and return to the sufferings of his guilty father.

Rezzonico might well be justified in thinking that the means he had taken to rid himself of the heir of the house of Mörner would be attended with success, from the moment that he had made the discovery of Adolphus's marriage. He laid the proofs of the crime of incest, with which he charged him, before the king. A warrant for his immediate arrest was dispatched to Rezzonico, who, as this affair came before ecclesiastical jurisdiction, was appointed with full powers to preside as judge in the cause. In order to keep the Count ignorant, for

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some time at least, of the fate of Adolphus, the abbot ordered him to be conducted to the castle of a baron, who was devoted to the interests of the church of Rome : here he was to be kept in safe custody until Rezzonico found the time ripe to pronounce judgment and lead him to execution. Rezzonico found out, by mere accident, where the Count Magnus Mörner had concealed himself. By his orders the soldiers were placed in the mine in order to watch the Count, and also to assist in the arrest of Adolphus, when Rezzonico should find it necessary. Immediately after the destruction of his castle and demesnes at Cronberg, the Count fled from the scene, and escaped from the horrors of that night, only to suffer greater misery. Rezzonico had promised to conceal the unfortunate Count in the cloisters of the abbey, and to the hated neighbour-

hood

hood of Riddarholmen he was obliged to turn his steps, in order to insure his escape from the messengers of justice which were dispatched in pursuit of him. Rezzonico had arrived only a few hours before the Count, and the haughty abbot did homage before the Count for the investiture of those moveables which the Count had promised to the abbey, and which in his necessities he did not think it prudent to refuse. Rezzonico was well pleased that the Count had fallen so unwittingly into his power, and he resolved to exert all his influence over the Count, and all his rhetoric in filling his mind with religious terrors, in order to extort from him the entire of his immense untenanted possessions, to be vested in the abbot and his successors on the Count's decease. This design of Rezzonico was baffled by the unexpected appearance of Herman

at the abbey. The Count no sooner beheld the traitor's countenance, than he resolved to fly from the treachery which he had no doubt was meditating against him. The Count fled from the abbey, and was driven by his guilty conscience, by the fear of death, and by the terrors of a public execution, into the lowest abyss of human misery.

The moment Rezzonico obtained intelligence of the place where the Count concealed himself, he laid the plan we have related to obtain possession of him once more, and he took care not to approach the person of the Count, until he came forward in the character of his deliverer. Rezzonico had kept aloof from him in the mine, and he seized an opportunity of coming unexpectedly upon the soldiers who were conveying him to prison. These soldiers were placed at the disposal of Rezzonico for the purpose of arrest-
ing

ing Adolphus; and from the well known power by which the confessor acted, they did not hesitate to become his instruments in his villainous scheme; nor did they refuse to deliver their prisoner into his hand, when the artful monk, with seeming pity for the Count, demanded it. The unfortunate man scarcely gave credit to his senses, when he found the chains with which they had bound him were removed. His mind, which was freed from the terrors of death, gave loose to extravagant joy, and while he kissed the knees of Rezzonico, he wept like a child, and implored the monk's benediction.

Rezzonico acted his part inimitably well: he raised him up—soothed him—and while he did not entirely dissipate his fears, he flattered him with assurances of his safety, and promised him, as far as lay in his power, to

conceal him from the pursuit of his enemies, and to exert all his influence to procure his final pardon. Rezzonico conducted his miserable patron once more to St. Bridget's Abbey, where the Count assumed for a time the habit of a lay brother of the order, pursuant to the advice of Rezzonico, who held out as the ostensible reason, that the Count would not be so liable to detection ; but in reality Rezzonico wished him to mingle in the prayers and austerities of the Fransiscans, in order that religious fears might predominate in his mind, and that he might be accustomed to that habit of obedience and ready deference, which the monks were always in the exercise of shewing towards him, since he had been invested with the authority of their abbot. That dread which the Count entertained of the tortures and eternal disgrace of a public execution,

was

was the chief auxiliary which Rezzonico possessed in his scheme of persuading his patron to disinherit his son, and convey his estates to the abbot of St. Bridget and his successors.

With respect to Adolphus the confessor felt perfectly at ease: he imagined he was at that time safe in the dungeon to which he had consigned him; and as he might easily be got rid of he no longer considered him as an obstacle to his designs. The Count was ignorant of Edda's existence; and after the death of Adolphus that secret would be secured in the bosom of Rezzonico alone. The fate of the Count seemed thus to be entirely placed in the hands of this insidious and immoral man, for Rezzonico had it in his power to prefer the charge of murder, or stay execution against him at pleasure,—as Herman

was the only witness who had as yet come forward to substantiate the charge, and over his now repentant mind the confessor had of late acquired complete ascendancy. When the Count's feeble frame had become still more emaciated by the abstinence and self-denial which Rezzonico persuaded him to practice, his mind seemed to have reached that point of imbecility and enervation which the abbot deemed favourable to his purpose. The confessor informed the Count that he had received a dispatch from the king, in which his majesty stated, he was informed that the Count was concealed in the abbey, and he besought the reverend father abbot to deliver up his person into the hands of justice. The dispatch stated further, the king's indignation against the Count for having deceived him with a shew of innocence, and afterwards flying from the
chance

chance of clearing himself before his peers, according to the laws of his country. Rezzonico filled the Count's mind with terror by this account; and when this despairing man was about once more to fly, the confessor detained him, and asked him whither he would proceed? "The king's guards are at the gate, there is no possibility of egress."

"I am lost! . . . past help! . . . past hope!". . . exclaimed the Count.

Rezzonico threw out a hint that there was a way by which he might yet be saved, and by which he might preserve his estate, his rank, and his life. The Count was all ear while Rezzonico continued: "For the children of the church, for those who become heirs of grace, by making the church heirs of their wealth,—we would arm ourselves with the holy pontiff's power, and shut our doors in the face of
" the

“ the civil authorities ;—aye, against
“ even their armed bands ! There is
“ but this last step left,” exclaimed
the monk : “Convey by deed of gift
“ the whole of your possessions in re-
“ mainder to this foundation, and we
“ will forthwith obtain’ from the sove-
“ reign pontiff a bull of grace,—a free
“ pardon for all your crimes and mis-
“ demeanors,—a rescript of sovereign
“ efficacy ; yea, even a passport unto
“ salvation ! We will then issue the
“ thunders of the Vatican against
“ those who would disturb your re-
“ pose. We will excommunicate even
“ a monarch who dares to wag his
“ tongue against you, or to lay ble-
“ mish upon the spotless purity of
“ your fame.”

The Count remained buried in
thought for a few minutes, during
which Rezzonico anxiously waited his
answer.

answer. The Count at length exclaimed in reverie, "I have a son!"

"True," cried Rezzonico interrupting him; "you *had* a son, but what is he now? a traitor to his country and his God! in league with the pillaging barons—fiends of hell! who spare neither age nor helpless infancy; who fired the abbey of Wadstena, and tossed into the flames the sisters of St. Ursula.—Is this a son to doat upon? to sacrifice your life for his fortunes?—he that in the field of battle would tilt his bloody spear against his father's heart?"

"'Tis horrible," cried Count Mörner; "how learned you this?"

Rezzonico now recounted to him the recent intelligence he had received with respect to the rescue of Adolphus by the White Cross Knights, from the king's guards; but he did not implicate himself in this affair, nor did he

he acquaint the Count with the cause of Adolphus's arrest. The confessor added, that he had the very guard ready to produce, who escaped in that skirmish, if the Count wished further proof of his statement,

The Count professed himself satisfied—dreadfully satisfied of the truth! and he held the sight of the king's guards in such abhorrence since his own capture, that he could not bear the mention of their appearance. Compelled by his fears to listen to the monk's overtures, he was at length induced to comply; and, with a trembling hand, he made over unto the Abbot of St. Bridget and his successors for ever, the entire of his possessions after his death.

Rezzonico, immediately on the execution of this deed by the Count, wrote a letter to the holy Pontiff, and dispatched a special messenger with it
on

on that very evening to Rome. The few soldiers who stood at the cloister portal, and acted their parts in this scene, by the orders of Rezzonico, were dismissed, and the artful abbot took every pains to relieve the Count's mind of further fear relative to this charge. But while he spoke, he uttered to heaven an hypocritical prayer to avert its heavy judgments from the Count's illustrious house, and to lighten the weight of that *curse* which held so baneful an influence on their prosperity. The Count's mind was always powerfully irritated whenever that subject rose before it; and as he was now relieved from all immediate anxiety respecting himself, his thoughts would sometimes stir him to revenge all his misfortunes upon the Olofs. When he relied upon procuring the promised favour and mediation of the holy father, with fullest confidence, he would
often

often start back, terrified at the waywardness of his fate; and his hopes of ultimate success would vanish, when he opposed to them the fatal influence which this hated family had obtained over the dim star of his house, which now waned fearfully and dismally, and, as he apprehended, approached unto a fearful end. He felt the course which his son had taken was a judgment on his head. He feared now for himself; and in his erring judgment this wretched fatalist imagined that by extinguishing the name of the Olof family for ever, his name would ascend and shine with all its original splendour: could he but effect this, he would then not value the Pope's interference: he might obtain his deed of gift, or set it aside:—his son would be restored to him—in mind, as well as blood, he might then call him his child:—the king's favour would flow in its former channel towards

wards him—his health would be restored, and his mind cleared of the visions which haunted it; while his estates would gladden his eye with plenty, and the dark towers of Riddarholmen would once more shew forth their sun-gilt spires; they would again rejoice in that beam, which since the *curse* had never shone through the dark clouds which lowered upon them. Such was the nature of that extraordinary infatuation which possessed his mind, that he thought the existence of the Olofs was the spell which held an influence similar to magic over him; and he imagined that the moment in which he should destroy the enchanters, the monsters and dire plagues which his wand had raised, would vanish like the gloomy images of a morning dream.

Rezzonico clearly understood the power which this passion of hatred exerted

exerted over the Count's mind, and he fed the flame with every artful insinuation and, dark suggestion. This diabolical fiend was not yet satisfied with what he had obtained; his restless ambition spurred him on—he thirsted after the enjoyment of his possessions; he was intriguing at the Holy See, and restless and eager to obtain the means of satisfying his creatures, and obtaining, by dint of bribery, those higher honours after which he panted.—He did not wish the Count to be long lived. He was in hopes that the strong arm of one of the Olofs, whose blood the Count thirsted after, might free him from a man, who having performed every thing the confessor expected and desired from him, hung like a dead incumbrance upon him, and prevented him from rising to his advancement.

Rezzonico had dispatched Herman
in

in a quarter where he expected some information might be obtained relative to the dreadful confederacy of the White Cross Knights. It was late in the evening when Herman returned to the abbey, and he was immediately conducted privately to the abbot's cell. The suspicions of Rezzonico had been from time to time awakened by those strange appearances which he had beheld, and those extraordinary sounds he had heard, which seemed to him to proceed from the bowels of the earth, at certain times of the night. How great was his dismay and consternation, when Herman informed him that he had every reason to believe, that in the very moment in which he spoke, the White Cross Knights were then assembled in deep council, in a subterraneous retreat, which extended under the very chair in which the reverend abbot was then sitting.

sitting. Rezzonico started appalled at the very sound of their dread name! and he instantly recollected the ghastly troop he had witnessed at midnight, and many other strange circumstances which had accompanied the frequent interviews he had held with Wildebrand of late. Herman's account rested entirely on the conclusions he drew from his own observations; but Rezzonico found it so confirmed by his own suspicions, that he gave it implicit credit. The next piece of intelligence which Herman communicated was scarcely of less importance. Prince Charles, the king's brother, had given in a memorial to his majesty, in which he deposed that the Count Waldemar Mörner, of whose murder the Count Magnus Mörner stands charged, is alive; he professes himself ready to substantiate it by proof, and by oath, and he prays that the Count

Magnus

Magnus shall be absolved from all accusation.

This account seemed a death blow to the hopes of Rezzonico. Prince Charles was a staunch Lutheran, and it appeared inexplicable to Rezzonico how he came to interest himself for the Count Mörner, who had so deeply offended the Lutheran aristocracy. The confessor looked at Herman.— Was Herman then the traitor? Herman the perjured! one who sought to ruin his master by a false accusation. Was it on this guilty foundation, and with this desperate associate, he was to raise himself into the seat of honour and power? No matter! he had gone too far to retreat; and his conscience was not startled even by the thought of giving speed and certainty to his advancement, by the immediate assassination of Count Magnus Mörner

Mörner himself. While the confessor encountered such dark and uncertain thoughts in his meditation, he gazed on Herman, and tried to solve his doubts, by examining the countenance of this man. This was the reputed assassin! and while Rezzonico dwelt on his sullen eye and downcast visage, he deemed that such a man as this was fitted to become his instrument in the dreadful purpose which he meditated. The Count's cell was situated near the abbot's—it was the hour of repose—the Count might be at that very moment asleep, or . . . if he struggled, Herman was a bold and muscular figure; his limbs athletic, and his hatred of his former master was bitter and interminable. While Rezzonico pondered, and with his eyes fixed on Herman, sat scrutinizing, the latter could not abide the abbot's look,
but

but threw his eyes upon the ground, on which he gazed even when he answered the monk's questions.

"Methought, Herman, that *you* ought to decide this point better than Prince Charles : say, how and when was this murder committed?" demanded Rezonnico, who wished to probe the feelings of Herman by touching on such a subject, in order to discover from his narration, if he could depend upon his assistance in committing another.

"I never like, holy father, to touch upon that subject. It is a weight upon my conscience! Holy father, the time was when I could not have done it."

"Thou art absolved from all sin, my son, I have given you absolution for that crime—you may therefore proceed without fear."

“ Without *fear* ! reverend father,” replied Herman, looking round the cell, as if he dreaded that some one might overhear what he was about to say ; “ I never think of it, nor speak of it without fear, since you, holy father, have described to me the judgments to come !” Herman now continued speaking in a low tone of voice, and with evident marks of fear. “ The Count Harold, you must know, holy father, had two sons ; the eldest, Waldemar, was of a fierce and warlike spirit, mischievous, and ever playing mad pranks upon the vassals : the youngest . . . but I need not describe him to you who know him . . . was the Count Magnus, my late master. My mother nursed the Count Magnus, and when we grew up, we were playfellows and sworn brothers.—

“ You

“ You cannot conceive how kind the
 “ Count was to me, and how great
 “ was my attachment !”

“ I can conceive it all most rea-
 “ dily,” cried Rezzonico impatiently.
 “ Proceed, good Herman, to the
 “ point,—to the *murder*.”

“ When my young masters,” con-
 tinued Herman, “ were introduced at
 “ the court of the great Gustavus
 “ Vasa, I accompanied them. The
 “ Princess Albertina. . . .”

“ Did she commit the murder ?”
 cried Rezzonico knitting his dark
 brows together, who thought each
 minute an age until his mind was
 satisfied upon this point.

“ You shall hear anon,” continued
 Herman displeased at the abbot’s in-
 terruptions ; “ I have lost the thread
 “ of my story ;—where was I ? Aye,
 “ the Princess Albertina was the
 “ greatest beauty at the court ;—but

“ as

“ as she was of the blood royal, our
“ young knights had better have
“ sighed in secret, than disclosed their
“ passion. The Count Waldemar loved
“ her ; —and, as I guessed, the Count
“ my master had a sneaking love for
“ her ; but of this I never had any
“ positive assurance. ’Twas said that
“ the Princess was attached to Count
“ Waldemar ; and some even went so
“ far as to say she had given him
“ strong proofs of her attachment. Be
“ that as it may, the affair reached
“ the ears of the old king.—If the
“ king had a suspicion of the attach-
“ ment of the Princess, ’tis thought
“ he might have been induced to give
“ his consent to their marriage. But
“ his mind was inflamed against Wal-
“ demar by Prince Eric, who, they
“ said, loved the Princess himself.*
“ The king was so irritated by the
“ artful stories of Prince Eric, who
“ took

“ took care that the Princess should
“ not approach his presence, that he
“ issued against Waldemar a sentence
“ of perpetual banishment, and com-
“ manded him, on pain of death, to
“ quit the capital in a few hours.
“ Waldemar confided in his brother
“ Magnus in this extremity; and he
“ expressed to him his determination
“ to lie in concealment near Stock-
“ holm, until the Princess Albertina,
“ whom he vowed never to leave un-
“ protected, should join him and ac-
“ company him to some foreign land.
“ We alone were trusted with the
“ secret of his retreat. The Princess,
“ instead of joining him at the time
“ he expected, was seized by Prince
“ Eric and committed to close cus-
“ tody, on the plea of punishing her
“ for an attempt to leave the king-
“ dom, which, as she had not ob-
“ tained the king’s consent, was
“ contrary

“ contrary to law. In this pri-
“ son, after some time, she was pri-
“ vately delivered of a son. When
“ intelligence of this event reached
“ the king, he was doubly irritated
“ against the Princess; but he was
“ heard to regret the absence of
“ Waldemar, whom he believed to be
“ in distant banishment; and it was
“ thought highly probable, that, had
“ he been present, he would have
“ sanctioned their marriage, in order
“ to preserve the reputation of the
“ Princess. This disposition of the
“ king alarmed Prince Eric and Count
“ Magnus, who hated his brother, and
“ they agreed to have him dispatched
“ in his retreat. About this time
“ Count Magnus received intelligence
“ from Riddarholmen, that the Count
“ Harold had been seized with an
“ alarming fit of illness; and he thus
“ saw himself on the eve of inherit-
“ ing

“ ing the honours of the family, pro-
“ vided that the obstacle of an elder
“ brother was removed. Waldemar
“ was totally ignorant of the Princess’s
“ confinement, and Magnus had art-
“ fully supplied himself with so many
“ seeming proofs of her infidelity, and
“ want of all regard for him, that
“ Waldemar was reduced to despair,
“ and prepared to quit the kingdom
“ from choice, if his resolution was
“ not strengthened by the alarming
“ account which Magnus gave him of
“ the king’s angry expressions against
“ him. It was on a dark December’s
“ night that I muffled myself up in
“ my cloak, and prepared to obey the
“ Count’s orders. It was down upon
“ the rocky shore of Mossebacken
“ that I was to meet four desperate
“ fellows like myself, who were in the
“ confidence of Prince Eric. There
“ is a place there among the rocks
“ where

“ where four roads meet ; the place
“ is whitened with skulls and dead
“ men’s bones, it being the spot where
“ criminals are executed.—’Tis so
“ bleak and barren a tract that not
“ even a dwarf fir tree grows for
“ miles around it.—In this place I
“ waited for my companions. The
“ minutes seemed long until they ap-
“ peared. At length they came, and
“ we arranged the plan of our attack,
“ as we were sure that in this place
“ we were not exposed to observation.
“ Waldemar was a very lion, and
“ would have played the devil among
“ us five, if he was prepared for our
“ attack ; it was therefore agreed on
“ that we should, if possible, shoot
“ him with our harquebusses, from
“ some place of ambush. Just as we
“ had arranged it we heard a noise on
“ the rock above us, and we were
“ alarmed lest some one should have
“ overheard

“ overheard our discourse ; but on
“ examining the place we found it
“ proceeded from the quarters of a
“ murderer which creaked on a gib-
“ bet on which he had been executed
“ that very day. My companions
“ made themselves merry at this cir-
“ cumstance ; but, I confess, trifling
“ as this dreadful sight appeared to
“ them, it filled me with terror and
“ apprehension of my future fate. It
“ was dark when we arrived at a little
“ cottage on the shore, in which
“ Waldemar was concealed. I had
“ hitherto remained in the rear of my
“ companions, and would willingly
“ have abandoned the enterprize if I
“ thought they would have allowed
“ me ; but they made a jest of my
“ cowardice, and called me forward
“ to describe what manner of man
“ this fiery Waldemar was, and how
“ he was apparelled. I had seen him,

“ on that very day in his green velvet
“ doublet, and I described to them
“ his appearance as well as I could
“ recollect, in order that we might
“ make no mistake in our man. We
“ perceived a light through the shut-
“ ters of the cottage casement, and
“ we approached it stealing softly on
“ tip-toe. Looking through the chinks
“ we beheld the Count Waldemar,
“ dressed as I have described, and
“ sitting at a little table reading. The
“ light which his lamp gave was none
“ of the brightest ; and his face, which
“ was shaded by his hand, was bent
“ over the book. If ever I saw the
“ Count Waldemar, I think I beheld
“ him then. I gave the concerted
“ signal. and. after resting
“ them with accurate aim, every one
“ fired his harquebuss through the
“ window. The body fell without a
“ groan ; and I can answer there was
“ not

“ not a spark of life remaining. But
“ when we examined it, we had no
“ further proof that it was the Count
“ Waldemar, for it was literally blown
“ to atoms! His domestic, alarmed
“ at the noise of our firearms, fled, as
“ we supposed, through a back door;
“ for on searching the cottage we
“ could not find him, and he has never
“ been heard of since. The body we
“ committed to one of the turbid falls
“ of the Meler, and we returned to
“ claim that reward which tempted
“ us to commit this fatal deed!”

After Herman had concluded, Rezonico remained silent for a few minutes; he then suddenly started up, and dismissed Herman with these words, which he uttered in a contemptuous tone: “ You may go to bed,
“ Herman!—Go...go...sleep!”

The confessor, after Herman had retired, took the lamp which hung be-

fore the image of the virgin, and after muttering some broken sentences to himself rather wild and incoherently, he cautiously proceeded up the passage leading to the cells of the monks. He paused and listened when he came to the door of that in which Count Magnus lay—he could hear no sound. “Can his sleep be so deep?” muttered Rezzonico to himself, “can this man sleep?” He softly raised the latch of the door, and thrust in his head cautiously. The hard and narrow pallet on which the Count rested was almost half the size of his narrow cell, and lay exposed to view. Rezzonico started back aghast when he beheld it—it was empty! The Count was not in the cell. The brethren were awakened, and called up—the cloisters searched, yet the Count was not to be found!

After dismissing the monks to their
cells

cells, the restless abbot once more quitted his. Ambition fired his brain, and would not let him sleep—fears began to alarm him; and in that hour he found it difficult to still his conscience. The fearful vicinity of the White Cross Knights appalled him; the sudden disappearance of the Count, proved that he was not yet reduced to sufficient subjection; and he dreaded lest some unlucky mischance might render all his well concerted plans finally abortive. The nearer he approached the consummation of his wishes, the stronger the fever of alarmed fancy and restless impatience worked upon him. He traced with hurried steps the dark and winding passages of the cloisters, and ever and anon he would open the portal, bend his ear to the night, and listen to hear if all was still; but he dared not trust his steps abroad at that hour.

hour : and yet sometimes his courage mounted, and he wished to wander near the mouth of that dread abyss, which concealed the foes of his faith, and the enemies of his God. He aspired a wish that to him it might be destined to discover their impious designs, and to frustrate their guilty purposes. He recollected once having seen Wildebrand emerging from the statue of St. Bridget. He was now filled with suspicion even with regard to Wildebrand ; he was now convinced that he was a White Cross Knight, and that it was to that order he had alluded, when he hinted to him on what terms he might be persuaded to save the state from ruin. He was determined their next meeting should be a final one—for another night in their vicinity he would not be tempted to spend. A thought struck him, that through the statue he might be enabled

abled to gain the secret way which descended into their retreat. He determined to explore that dread path 'ere he quitted Riddarholmen, that he might be enabled to report to the king himself all the information he had been able to procure concerning this extraordinary affair.

CHAP. XVI.

This desert soil
 Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold,
 Nor want we skill or art, from whence to raise
 Magnificence.

MILTON.

And thou, sly hypocrite....
avaunt !
 Fly thither whence thou fled'st : if from this hour
 Within these hallow'd limits thou appear,
 Back to th' infernal pit I drag thee chain'd !

MILTON.

THE long and unaccountable absence of Tigerhielm and his friends, had given additional force to those reports which Wildebrand and his partizans had secretly spread to his prejudice. The charge of treason to the order, and desertion of their sacred cause, was no longer whispered through their ranks, and confided with secrecy and caution

caution to the ear of their friends alone. Their suspicions amounted now to conviction — the charge of treachery was loudly proclaimed, and industriously propagated: they now met each other's looks with a feeling of shame, at suffering so easily such an imposition to be practised on them, and were indignant that they had given the direction of their high cause into the hands of a man whom they now began to consider only in the light of a specious charlatan. The utmost disorder and insubordination prevailed in their subterraneous retreat, and their cruel murders and atrocious excesses so stained their characters as soldiers, that several of the elder knights, whose characters claimed for them the utmost respect, quitted the mine and vaults of Riddarholmen castle with disgust, when they found their exertions no longer successful in quell-
ing

ing the mutinous spirit which prevailed, and restoring the wonted order and discipline which used to distinguish the Knights of the White Cross. Wildebrand, who was the favourite of the soldiery, saw himself by these events placed nearly at the summit of his hopes. The soldiers hailed him as their leader; and those knights who were better entitled to the distinction, gladly waved their claim, in the hopes of seeing order at length restored, and the final ruin of the confederacy averted, until such time as their old chief would return and resume the command.

The first sacrifice which fell to the vindictive spirit of Wildebrand, on his elevation to the command, was the Baron Kruzen, to whom Christina was attached, and who was shortly to become his wife. He was too firmly bound to the interests of his absent chief, to vote for the elevation of a
man

man whom he held in so little estimation as Wildebrand. It will be recollected that Christina had watched the steps of Wildebrand when visiting the cell of Rezzonico, through the statue of St. Bridget. Her suspicions she communicated to Kruzen, who incautiously let fall some expressions on the subject, which were reported to Wildebrand. Shortly after Kruzen was found dead in his bed; but before his death he found means to send off a secret dispatch to Tigerhielm, informing him of the desperate state of the order. Orders were issued to apprehend Christina, who had fled from the chamber of Kruzen, but she fortunately made her escape through the secret passages of the mine.

Edda, from whom we have so long digressed, remained as yet safe in her retreat, under the protection of Olaus and Conrad. The long protracted absence

sence of Adolphus and Montbazon filled her with alarm ; but 'Olaus constantly sustained her hopes, and Conrad carefully concealed from her all information concerning Adolphus, which might add to her uneasiness. The dispatch sent by Kruzen before his death, reached Tigerhielm, and filled him with surprise and consternation. He received it too, at a moment of immense importance to all their interests. King John, dismayed at seeing his land laid waste from one extremity to the other—his whole kingdom steeped in blood, and the flower of his troops taken by surprise and slain by unknown and terrible assailants, determined to give up an attempt which had already cost his subjects so dear ; and he privately invested Prince Charles, who was a known favourer of the Lutheran cause, with full powers of pardon, a free
promise

promise of toleration, and a guarantee that the design so odious to the majority of all classes of his subjects, as the introduction of the religion of the church of Rome, should be abandoned for ever*. He expected, therefore, on this his gracious declaration, that all faithful knights would return, and support the glory of his crown, and that all his subjects, of every denomination, would be recalled to their former allegiance. The King placed a body of troops at the disposal of Prince Charles for the security of his person, in treating with his rebellious barons; and as a means of exterminating any band of outlaws, who might take an advantage of the troubles of the times, and who might not be induced to lay down their arms when every pretext of civil war had ceased, a notice to the chief of the White Cross Knights had been written by Prince Charles him-

* Vide Note at the end of the Volume.

self on his appointment. He knew not, however, where this dread chief was to be found—but the billets were dispersed through the country, and at length one of them reached Tigerhielm at Riddarholmen. That chief instantly took the resolution of trusting in the Prince's honour for the safety of himself and his chosen companions, and set out to meet him in the place appointed for the interview. But ere the terms of the treaty were sufficiently adjusted, and before every security was given that was necessary to insure the personal safety of each member of the confederacy, the account of the disorder which reigned at Riddarholmen reached Tigerhielm. He was dismayed at this intelligence for many reasons. The excesses which the White Cross Knights were now guilty of, might possibly irritate the king so much, that

he

he might feel himself justified in breaking off a treaty which was conducted in the face of such dreadful outrages. Nay, his life and the lives of his companions might be instantly sacrificed as an atonement for the wanton barbarity of the rest of the order; and at all events the kingdom ran the risk of being still convulsed by the atrocities of these mistaken men. In vain had the king selected a wise and virtuous prince of their own faith to give peace to their bleeding country — vain was his lenity towards his rebellious barons, — and vain all the cares of the chief and his associates to secure a firm and lasting treaty with the king, if the flames of civil war were still to rage, and if the storm, which the presence and awe-inspiring name of Tigerhielm himself had contributed to raise, should blacken the land with deeper horrors — with wider ruin, and should refuse

to

to be stilled by that voice which had bid its waves roar, and first set its dark billows in commotion.

The mind of Tigerhielm was rapid to conceive, and swift in execution; he felt his soul stirring within him, and his cheek burning with shame, at the wild pranks of these hot-headed boys, as he designated his absent brethren. As his hand and arm had been devoted to the good cause of his country, its freedom and religion, and yet was never spotted with a single stain in that holy warfare, so he was determined to achieve the mighty exploit without dishonour,—to reduce his rebellious companions to the observation of that honourable covenant which originally bound them together, or die, if they dared to violate their bond; to give up his life in defence of the holy laws of justice and humanity, and in upholding and perpetuating by his example the

the inviolable faith of knighthood,—the proud and dignified observance of the laws and ordinances of chivalry. To offer up his last breath as a sacrifice to the interests of that country which he loved, to give his heart's best blood as the last token of his remembrance of it, and expire in the meridian of his splendour and his fame, 'ere his sun should set in clouds, or his reputation be blasted by the breath of dishonourable imputation.

Tigerhielm, after making a communication to Prince Charles and his friends, quitted the encampment, where they held their deliberations, in the disguise of a pilgrim, and no intreaties which his friends made use of could induce him to lay aside the purpose which he meditated.

The knights having elected Wildebrand, Tigerhielm was deposed in form, and as a solemn ceremony was

necessary to denounce him as an enemy and devote him to the daggers of the confederates, Wildebrand invited them in the evening to a solemn banquet, where he proposed to enjoy his triumph, and doom the hated Tigerhielm to inevitable death. In the meanwhile strict orders were issued to the sentinels on duty, that in case of Tigerhielm's approach, their harquebusses should be pointed against the bosom of the traitor; and Wildebrand, who felt his heart throb with fear at the mere mention of his name, or at the bare possibility of his obtaining entrance into the mine, ordered the guards at every pass to be doubled, and he recommended to the sentinels of the watch the utmost caution and circumspection.

The banquet was now set forth,—the wine sparkled in the goblet, and the table groaned beneath a profusion
of

of the most delicious viands. It was given in one of the caverns of the mine which was separated from the great shaft. This cavern was remarkable for the beauty of the ore and the brilliancy of the sparry incrustations which adorned it; the roof was elevated and rose in the form of a dome from the sides; the continual dropping of the moisture which trickled through the veins of ore above, had, in the course of centuries, formed pillars of the most exquisite beauty between the floor and the roof; the sides of the cavern and the surfaces of these natural pillars were covered with chrystals of various forms and colours. From the roof hung innumerable branches of spar, which were covered with wreaths of artificial flowers which descended along the sides of the grotto, and were entwined round the pillars; and by the many coloured crystals with

L 2

which

which the cavern abounded, the blaze of a thousand lamps was so reflected and multiplied, that the brilliancy of this banquet chamber emulated the splendour of day. The Knights of the White Cross, who never laid aside their iron armour 'by night or by day, were seated at the table. The luxury of every thing around them confounded them for some moments, for Wildebrand had exerted himself and his friends for their entertainment, and had kept the preparations a secret, in order that by this sudden display they might be dazzled by his magnificence and struck with the contrast which he exhibited to the stern and unsociable Tigerhielm.

The knights were astounded, and they smiled,—but it was the smile of contempt, and not of pleasure; and Wildebrand was disappointed when he perceived their stern looks under their
iron

iron helmets, looks which never relaxed, even when the wine was circulated ; but he took courage when he recollected he had other luxuries to surprise them with. In the course of the banquet, on a signal given by Wildebrand, several female dancers wantonly attired, suddenly appeared at the end of the grotto, and executed a voluptuous dance to wanton measures ; they were celebrated courtezans, who had been captured by Wildebrand, and who were forced, on pain of death, to tread with the maze of pleasure and to fill with the song of joy those caverns which threatened to become their eternal prison. The stern countenances of the knights did not relax during this unexpected exhibition ; they eyed these mummers with indifference, and gave no token of applause. •

As soon as the masque was ended, and the masquers had retired, Wilde-
 • L 3 • brand,

brand, who guessed that something more solemn, and more relative to the purposes for which they had associated, would command a deeper interest, gave orders that the skull should be set forth, in order to fill that horrid bowl of death with the symbol of Tigerhielm's blood.

At this moment the sentinels of the watch gave token of some strange alarm, and the knights hearing the confusion, suddenly rose and half drew their swords. At the door leading into the cloister prisons a *Franciscan Monk* had been found lurking; the sentinels had seized him, and while they bore him along with loud cries, they mocked him and smote him, but he held his peace, and would return no answer to their sarcasms. When the knights heard this, their countenances lowered with anger, and they commanded the *Franciscan* to be brought before

before them ; and, impelled by their gloomy fanaticism, they joined together their hands, and swore by their terrible oath, that they would instantly drink of that Fransiscan's blood. The conscience of Wildebrand suddenly smote him ; he feared that this Fransiscan Monk was no other than the intrepid Rezzonico. He had given him warning to avoid the approaches of the mine, and on that very evening did Rezzonico purpose leaving Riddarholmen, bearing with him a covenant executed by Wildebrand, in which, for a certain reward, he stipulated to betray his associates to the King. Could it be possible, that the Confessor was taken with this document of his treachery upon him ? He looked around upon those terrible knights, and he felt convinced that he had not the power of saving Rezzonico from their deadly grasp ; their eyes were red with the

expression of vengeance, and their gloomy looks were turned to smiles of triumph, when they heard the footsteps of their approaching victim. Fanaticism had so hardened their hearts and perverted their understandings, that they might be taken by an observer for demons who thirsted after human blood, and exulted in inflicting torture on mankind. The knights, when they looked round, marked the pale cheek and irresolute eye of Wildebrand, and his feelings amounted to agony when on introducing the Monk he recognized by marks, in which he could not be deceived, the cowl of the Abbot Rezzonico. The Monk's dress was dreadfully stained with blood, and Wildebrand in that moment wished that the Monk would drop down dead, ere his tongue should utter that which would inevitably destroy him.

The guards who brought in the
Monk

Monk were ordered to retire and wait without, while the knights arose, and with one accord demanded of the Monk his name, and the errand which brought him within their boundaries. Wildebrand spoke not, but he gazed with horrid anxiety upon that Monk, whose face was so shaded by his cowl, that it was impossible to discern a feature of his countenance. The Monk spoke in answer to the knights, and Wildebrand felt instantly relieved from the dreadful weight which oppressed him, for it was not the voice of Rezzonico !

“ You should be men,” exclaimed the stranger, “ whom dire misfortunes
“ have joined in fellowship. If I read
“ your stern countenances aright, ye
“ are men who carve out justice with
“ your swords and wait not on the
“ law’s delay, nor on majesty’s pre-
“ rogative. If I read aright—ye shew
“ mercy

“ mercy where the world, guided by
“ its dull and plodding rules, condemns
“ and punishes.”

“ No more of this,” cried several knights in anger, “ Who are you ?”

“ I am not what I *seem*,” replied the stranger with warmth.

“ Who can this man be ?” cried the knights, turning to one another.

“ Listen,” said the stranger calmly ;
“ the fame of a warlike brotherhood
“ has filled the land—the White Cross
“ Knights have risen in arms and
“ rescued their country from oppres-
“ sion ; the rod of the ruler has be-
“ come a serpent which has stung his
“ guilty hand !—The shame, the eter-
“ nal shame of having this country
“ ruled by priestcraft, imbecility and
“ folly they have warded from us, and
“ the tyrant bigot they have caused
“ to tremble on his throne. Such are
“ their acts ; but they are brave war-
“ riors !

" riors! I need not say how unlike
 " the gaudy trappings of this licen-
 " tious banquet must be their place of
 " solemn meditation, and how different
 " their exploits to yours! You, who
 " are content perhaps to prey on
 " feeble men, whose contributions
 " have been raised by stopping the
 " casual and unprotected traveller, and
 " whose blades have never been stain-
 " ed but with the blood of old women
 " and children!"

A murmur ran through the knights
 at this strange address. Wildebrand
 vociferated angrily that the stranger
 should instantly be slain; but the
 knights returned their half drawn
 swords into their scabbards, and while
 they confessed to one another that they
 had deserved this reproof, they re-
 solved to let the stranger proceed.

The stranger, who had stood with
 an haughty air during this interrup-
 tion

tion, now sent forth the same awful tones of that voice which ventured to discourse on such dangerous matter. "I had heard of the fame of the "White Cross Knights," continued he, "and in that moment of enthusiasm I swore to join them and devote my life to their service. I have as yet been unsuccessful in my search, but on my way I have performed a deed which will be a passport to their favour, and may no doubt cause me to be enrolled in their ranks."

"Aye! what deed? name it!" cried the knights.

"In that Abbey," continued the stranger, "which covers the earth above us with its ruins, I took shelter ere while from a storm which suddenly came violent from the west; concealed in one of its dark aisles I listened to its fury, when immediately

“ diately athwart one of the ruined
“ arches there passed by me a man
“ who seemed engaged in meditation,
“ and who talked busily with himself.
“ I lay remote from his observation,
“ but I could see him and hear him.
“ It was a Frānsiscan Monk, who, in
“ the soliloquy which I overheard,
“ talked of his hatred of the White
“ Cross Knights, and of their high
“ cause, with bitter contempt. He
“ muttered aloud his purposes of re-
“ venge, nay more, of his power to
“ betray and destroy them, and he
“ cursed that loud storm which had
“ stopped him on his journey to the
“ King. I bid the storm rage on, and
“ while it roared I griped the Monk,
“ I dragged him by the hair of his
“ head,—Sir Knights! while on his
“ knees he begged for mercy, I slew
“ him in the sanctuary! I threw the
“ dead man’s cowl around me for a
“ momentary

“ momentary disguise, and dragged
“ his body from the Abbey !”

The stranger shewed forth from the cowl a dagger tinged with blood, he held it towards the knights and exclaimed : “ Behold this dagger ! with
“ this I slew him, and from its blade
“ his blood yet drops !”

The knights now looked on the stranger with amazement, and a murmur of approbation ran through them at this sight ; but some of them, incited by Wildebrand, who could not smooth his brow, nor conceal his terror while the stranger spoke, cried out,
“ he only deceives us, ’tis a stratagem
“ to save his life.”

“ If you wish for the proof of what
“ I advance,” replied the stranger,
“ seek it in the adjoining shaft, whither
“ I threw the body from an aperture
“ above, in doing which your soldiers
“ seized me !”

While

While some of the guards were sent into the shaft to seek for the body, the stranger stood erect, mute and of haughty carriage. Wildebrand, who had not foreseen the consequences of his having accused the stranger of falsehood, now trembled on his high seat, and it was not without dread that he saw the knights every moment viewing the stranger with increased approbation.

In a few moments the guards returned, bearing in the body. They placed it on a low platform which was situated exactly opposite the pedestal, on which the names of those condemned by the tribunal of the White Cross were inscribed. This pedestal was surmounted by the human skull from whence they made libations preparatory to the sacrifice of a victim, which were symbolical of the blood of the condemned, and which, after
tasting

tasting of the cup, they scattered abroad to the four points of heaven. There was a blank left on the front of the pedesdal, which on that night was to be filled up with the name of Tigerhielm. It was observed that the stranger stood between the pedestal and the dead body, upon which he looked alternately, while the knights, turning round from the banquet, rivetted their looks upon these strange sights, which, seen by the glow of many tapers, and on which the effulgence of many coloured crystals played with changeable light, afforded a strange contrast to the luxurious banquet which preceded it.

The body was mangled in its fall, but enough was visible to prove it the remains of the wicked and aspiring Rezzonico! His countenance retained a severe and threatening aspect, even in death, and upon his lips was visible
that

that curl of contempt which was habitual to him, and which he always shewed towards his fellow man. There might be traced in it a feeling of scorn for the species which never deserted him in his last hour, and which seemed even here to reign, in despite of the taunts and yells of triumph which these hell-hounds exhibited, when they recognized in the lifeless form before them—the ambitious churchman,—the intriguing priest,—the friend of cruelty and oppression,—and their greatest and most formidable enemy.

The knights now cried out together, that the stranger was worthy to be enrolled among the White Cross Knights, and to become their brother. “Approach,” exclaimed the knights, “and join our banquet!”

The stranger, ’ere he placed himself at the table, gave one look upon the dead;—and it was visible from the
dilation

dilation of his form, and from the heaving of his garment, that he suffered great emotion. The knights who sat nearest to him could hear him softly exclaim, "Farewell! proud priest!
".....and with thee perish tyranny
"and religious persecution for ever!
"If by thy death this good is purchased, I have done a glorious deed.
"Let thy name, and the remembrance of thy actions, live a terrible example to future ages—that hypocrisy never goes unpunished,—a sin which includes almost all crimes;
"for he that deceives his God, must be cruel and unjust towards man!
"—Oh! God, let this man be the last sacrifice,—the last victim whose blood may be shed in thy name,
"oh God!..... Once more, Rezzonico . . . *hypocrite!* farewell!"

The stranger now approached the table, and took his seat among the knights.

knights.—The goblet passed quickly round; but the stranger neither ate nor drank; and Wildebrand, in spite of his feigned mirth, felt the ague of fear whenever he looked towards that awe-inspiring man. The mirth of the junior knights vanished when they heard the hollow tones of his chilling monosyllables, and the elder knights strove in vain to engage him in discourse. Wildebrand, whose situation became every moment more painful, now assumed a solemnity of manner, while he addressed the knights, and reminded them of the serious business which was to conclude the evening. He desired that the guards should set forth the fatal bowl, and he commanded the stranger to withdraw.

“He is our brother,” cried some of the knights; “let him remain!”

“Let him remain!” resounded from every side of the cavern.

Wildebrand

Wildebrand was forced to yield to the general voice.—He filled the bowl of death; but 'ere he drank he recapitulated the treason of Tigerhielm.

“ ‘*Tis false !*’ ” cried a voice.

“ Whence comes that interruption ? ” demanded Wildebrand ; yet all the knights were silent.

When Wildebrand had drank, but 'ere the knights had touched the fatal draught, the stranger stood up. “ Give me the bowl,” cried he.

The knights admired the readiness with which he joined in their ceremonies. The stranger took the fatal skull, but paused 'ere he drank. “ To the death of the traitor . . . Wildebrand ! ” he exclaimed.

“ Hah ! ” cried Wildebrand. “ Sir Knights assist your chief.”

“ Assist *your chief*, I cry,” said the stranger who rose and dashed away the cowl, and stood forth a warrior, whose

whose coat of steel was embossed with gold, and whose terrific helmet and device proclaimed the terrible Tigerhielm.

The elder knights stood up by the side of their glorious chief, whose pretended treasons his presence alone seemed to refute. But some of the junior knights, and a party of the guards, headed by Otter, who rushed in during the confusion, joined Wildebrand, who stood on his defence, and with loud cries in vain commanded them to cut down the traitor. The lordly port, and terrific appearance of Tigerhielm, seemed to hold his recreant associates at bay. But all the knights drew forth their swords; and the clashing of their steel and their shouts at their terrible onset, now reverberated through the cavern. In the loudest of the confusion the voice of Tigerhielm might be heard accusing Wildebrand of a base design to betray them,

them, and vouching the agreement to that effect, which he had discovered on the person of Rezzonico, as a proof of his assertion. The minds of several of Wildebrand's friends began to waver at this intelligence; those knights who had joined him, now deserted him, and the soldiers headed by Otter and Ulfsax, were all who remained fighting on his side. The powerful arm of Tigerhielm and his fellow knights quickly routed them from the cavern; but they unfortunately made good their retreat to the deserted part of the mine, in which was situated the turret of Tigerhielm, which Wildebrand had discovered. The passage which led to this shaft was so narrow, that Wildebrand and his party found no difficulty in fortifying it, by rolling down the loose rocks against the aperture in such a manner, that it was found impossible to force it.

Tigerhielm

Tigerhielm, when he discovered the strength of their position, resolved on withdrawing his force from the mine altogether. He closed up all the apertures leading into the shaft where Wildebrand had taken refuge with his troops, who were ever kept vigilant and on the alert. The provisions were removed from the interior of the mine, out of the reach of the besieged, and there seemed every probability that Wildebrand and his desperate associates would be forced by hunger, in a few days, to surrender at discretion.

CHAP. XVII.

..... His notes are heard
 At noon of night, where, on the coast of blood,
 The lacerated son of Angola
 Howls forth his sufferings to the moaning wind;
 And when the awful silence of the night
 Strikes the chill death-dew to the *murderer's* heart!
 He speaks in every conscience-prompted word,
 Half uttered, half suppressed.

REMAINS OF H. K. WHITE.

PASSING along the narrow corridore,
 which led to the cell of the monks in
 St. Bridget's cloister, the Count Mag-
 nus Mörner had recognized, to his
 infinite dismay, the voice of Herman
 in conference with Rezzonico. He
 could not gather the purport of their
 discourse—but the friendly tone in
 which they spoke — the mention of
 Waldemar and Albertina — his own
 name too, which he heard at intervals,
 conspired

conspired to fill him with suspicion of the confessor, and apprehension of his designs. He took the resolution of instantly quitting the abbey, unknown to Rezzonico : he effected this by removing the decayed iron grating which defended the window of his cell. This circumstance of being thrown once more abroad on the world, whetted his terrible purpose respecting the Olofs ; and on his way to the borders of the lake, he reviewed the various calamities and misfortunes of his life ; all of which this erring casuist referred to his favourite system of fatality, under which he thought it was doomed that he should not, nor *could* not prosper. By this extraordinary line of argument which he adopted, he became strengthened in his terrible purpose ; and he resolved either to redress his wrongs, or to revenge them—by the extirpation of the family of the

Olofs. He had taken the precaution, ere he quitted the abbey, to lay aside the lay brother's habit, and he resumed the common miner's dress again, as better adapted for the purpose of concealment. He hid his poignard beneath his vest, so that he imagined he should avoid all suspicion by the way. But the quick and irresolute movement of his eyes, and the agitation of his frame, might have betrayed that he had some wicked purpose in contemplation. It was twilight when he arrived on the shores of the lake. The whole landscape was massed in gloomy indistinctness: the wind blew shrill through the rents of his coarse cloak; and when he stood to gather breath, after his hurried walk, the brown leaves of winter fell thick around him. The heart of this man did not relent; the finger of Providence had not touched it! nay, from all the gloomy
images

images around him, he borrowed gloomier thoughts; and he sought to turn all circumstances to evil, and to harden his own heart. Upon that heaven which spread itself above him, he did not dare to look; upon that God who speaks in all things, he did not dare to think! There was but one image which filled his mind, and upon which he turned with agony—his own misery—his degradation—his despair! He would sometimes stop in his course and beat his forehead distractedly, tear up his hair by the roots, and bruise his body on the ground: but soon a miserable calmness would succeed; a fixed and subdued energy, which bound up his muscles for a time, but it threatened a terrible convulsion which would again derange him. He came to the banks of a river which he was obliged to cross in his way to Olof's cottage. It was

a rough and mountain torrent, which took its rise at some distance among the hills, and descended down their rugged sides into the lake. Heavy rains had fallen which had swelled the stream beyond its banks. The bridge which the Count expected to find at the place where he stood, had been swept away by the violence of the flood—not a vestige of it remained; and a few planks of its flooring now and then emerged from the red and heavy mass of the waters. Some peasants' cottages, which were situated higher up on its banks, had been destroyed by this sudden inundation. The cattle had perished in the fold; and many of the miserable inhabitants had been swallowed up by the flood, when endeavouring to save their property from ruin.

The Count, while he hurried to and fro, upon a little point of land which now formed the river's boundary towards

wards the lake, listened with a moody spirit to the roaring of the gloomy water. He saw before him a spot where several contending currents struggled in their course; and so great was the whiteness of the foam, that it created in that dark tide a spot of light, through which the Count saw, or imagined he saw, the dark bodies of drowning men emerging and disappearing—he beheld borne before him at intervals the wreck of all things—huge beams of timber; the remains of their cottages; and trees torn up by the roots. The bloated carcasses of animals floated by him down the centre of the stream; and once he shaped an object, which was borne along lightly and rapidly, into an infant's cradle; and he thought he heard its miserable wailing... its cry of death!

While the Count gazed on these sights

of horror, the river gained further on the bank. The spot where the Count stood became gradually surrounded with water; and, on looking around him, he uttered a convulsive cry of horror, when he saw every possibility of retreat cut off. While he looked round him in despair, he espied a little bark making its way with difficulty across the breakers which the river formed where it discharged itself into the lake. His cry must have been heard; and his agitated gait must have denoted his distress; for the little bark, ere it crossed to the opposite shore, stood up for the small point of land on which the Count was exposed to such imminent danger: its space was contracted every moment by the swelling of the waters, and in a few minutes he must inevitably have perished. When the bark approached, the Count waded as far

far as he could through the water to meet it; but the youth who held the helm started when he beheld the savage appearance and blood-shot eye of the man, whom at the risk of his own life he came to succour.

“Thou wilt not harm us,” cried the youth, “if we take thee in?—
“or perchance it is thy misery has
“given thee that desperate look? say,
“are we too late to save thy wife and
“children? is it their loss grieves
“thee?”

“I am a miserable man,” cried the Count, “I stand alone in the world!”

“Ah! he has lost his love, and that
“has craz’d him!” cried from the boat a female voice of great sweetness, “save the man of misery!”

The youth now assisted the Count into the boat, and immediately shaped his course circuitously, in order to cross the mouth of the river. The

Count sat down in a retired part of the boat, and as the moon was now rising, he drew his hat over his eyes, in order to conceal his countenance from the observation of his companions. He raised his eyes furtively and with wonder on the female who had interceded for him, and whom he now beheld in the moon's light. Her dress was disposed with a taste and elegance far above the appearance of a cottager. Her slender figure, which seemed shrouded by the white sail against which she stood, was exquisitely formed; her dark and luxuriant hair floated in the breeze of night, and her hands were clasped across her bosom, while with an eye filled with a wild and alarming expression, she gazed intently and silently upon the rising moon. The beauty of her countenance touched the Count with a strange and indefinable emotion; and
when

when he turned from her towards the youth who held the helm, he beheld in his the open, manly, and innocent expression which irresistibly seizes on the heart, and fills the beholder with confidence, benevolence, and hope. He turned away his eyes from them, and fixed them on the darkest part of the landscape : he could not contemplate innocence, beauty, and youth, and still harbour in his heart those guilty thoughts to which he had delivered his mind. He could not turn back to the days of his youth, when he was of their years, without feeling all the pangs of the most excruciating remorse. He feared also that his heart might be moved and softened in his own despatch ; and he sought to acquire sterner feelings by darker contemplations. The maid, after a long pause, began to sing as the boat was rolling slow and heavily

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through the sullen breakers. But she wandered from the air, and her voice warbled so wildly, and she soared into such lofty flights of rapid and difficult execution, trembling on the very verge of discord, and then sweetly falling with graceful cadence into the original air, that it was impossible for those who heard her to remain unmoved at her song: yet that melody was so strange and sadly wild, that the Count while he listened found himself strangely moved—such sounds as these, so fraught with woe and lamentation, appeared to be the terrible prelude of the dark deeds which were to mark that night. He thought he recognized in the original air one that he had heard in his youth, and he observed aloud to the young peasant, that he had in his younger days heard, but could not recollect the name of the ditty.

“Aye!”

“Aye!” said the youth, “you must be a stranger in these parts, if you don’t recollect that air—have you never heard of Sigismund Count of Möiner?”

The Count groaned in anguish, and after a moment nodded his head in the affirmative.

“Mayhap, then,” continued the youth, “you have heard of the *Curse of Ulrica*, and all the misfortunes which the family have suffered in consequence of it.”

The feelings of the Count were now almost too excruciating to admit of concealment. He shaded his face with his hand, while the youth continued. “The ditty which my sister sings was composed in a moment of despondency, and at a time when the *Curse of Ulrica* was fulfilling, by an old bard who was attached to the fortunes of the house. If I, M 6 thought

“ thought the words would amuse
“ you,” I would ask my sister to join
“ them with the melody she now
“ sings; but she is not quite in her
“ right mind, owing to the death of
“ her lover, and the dangers she has
“ narrowly escaped from—but she will
“ be well anon, and then you shall
“ hear them.”

“ No, no,” cried the Count. “ I
“ have no wish to hear them—they
“ will drive me mad,” thought he,
“ I cannot look upon them nor listen
“ to them without feeling a woman’s
“ fears and fondness filling my heart
“ —it is not because they saved my
“ wretched life—no, no, I must hate
“ them and all mankind.”

The miserable Count now leaned
over the side of the boat, and as he
viewed the receding shore, he espied
a little landing place, which was formed
among some low flat rocks, which

ran down to the water's edges., From this spot, a little black path was worn in the snowy ground, which wound among the cliffs for a short distance, and was then lost in the woods which covered them. The Count now pointed out this place to the youth, and requested him to put him on shore at the landing place.

“ You had better come home to our cottage,” cried the youth, “ I can promise you a good welcome, and good cheer.”

“ No, no,” replied the Count, “ I am in misery and poverty—I can only repay you with my poor thanks —why should I diminish your little store? set me on yon dark shore, good youth, 'tis all the favour I demand.”

“ Nay, nay, come with us,” said the youth; “ the miserable and poor were never driven from our cottage; the

“ the misfortunes you have suffered
“ are not owing to *your* imprudence
“ or criminality ; it is the awful visi-
“ tation of heaven which has deprived
“ you and many other peasants of
“ their homes and property.”

“ This cuts to the heart !” ejaculated the Count mentally.

“ Such as I have described,” continued the youth, “ who are not re-
“ duced to want by their own exces-
“ ses, are always sure of finding a
“ friendly welcome from my father,
“ Axel Olof.”

The Count started up in the boat, and while he rolled his eyes wildly on them he whispered softly, “ Olof *their*
“ father !”

“ And as for payment, we demand
“ it not,” cried the youth, without taking notice of the Count’s move-
ment, “ my father is thriving in all
“ his

“ his concerns, heaven shines upon his
“ grey and venerable head !”

“ Hah !” repeated the Count, “ heaven
“ shines upon *him*—upon *Olof* !”

The Count now so vehemently insisted on being put on shore, that the youth turned the head of the boat towards land reluctantly, but he saw it was in vain to press the stranger further. While they rapidly approached the bank, the Count’s eyes would wander from the shore he gazed on, and fix upon Carl and Christina. His features would then assume a deadlier cast, and his hand would involuntarily clasp the handle of the poignard which was concealed under his vest. The tones of Christina’s wild song would at times seem to sooth him, and at others his transports, from that incomprehensible melody would amount to ungovernable frenzy.

When they reached the bank, Carl
inter-

interrupted the Count's strange reverie, by demanding whither he intended to proceed when they put him on shore?

"The path you behold," said he, "leads to no town or hamlet, 'tis merely a way worn by our feet when we descend these cliffs to fish from yonder rocks—you had better come with us, 'tis shorter by water than by that path to my father's cottage."

"Hah!" cried the Count, "that path leads to Olof's cottage?"

Carl nodded in the affirmative, while the Count seemed buried in thought.

When the boat touched the shore, the Count gazed on them both for a moment, and then leaped with precipitation on the rocks. He spoke not to them when they parted, but gazed on them vacantly while their little bark receded. He sat buried in reverie for some time upon the cold rocks, which were dripping with the spray

spray of the lake. He heard, again, at intervals, that plaintive ditty so strangely wild, mingling with the agitation of its waters; and to his agitated mind and dejected spirits, the hollow sound of the wind, as it swept among the cliffs above him, and rustled through the solemn foliage of the pines, appeared to utter strange things. He now lost sight of the bark, which was borne rapidly before the wind; and on the lake over which the Count now threw an anxious look, not a speck was discernible which might denote the distant sail approaching Olof's cottage,—for the Count was apprehensive lest his purpose might be thwarted by the approach of some of the neighbouring hinds. He gazed long upon the water, but he could discern no moving object except the liquid surface undulating in the moon's light, which spread in a line of silver from shore

shore to shore. The Count looked up and cursed her light, which beheld his actions and might betray him 'ere he perpetrated the fatal deed. The Count spent many hours in tracing the turns of that devious path. It was midnight when he crossed the sandy beach which led from the lake to Olof's cottage. The little bark was drawn up upon the strand ; as he stopped to examine it, he reflected that it therefore was evident that Carl and Christina had arrived safe at the cottage, and he murmured in vain a wish that the waves had swallowed them on their way, and saved him from the judgment of having their blood upon his head. He advanced cautiously towards the cottage, and he trod lightly, lest the motion of the sand beneath his feet should betray him to the watchful ear. He walked round the cottage several times, and anxiously
listened

listened at every crevice to hear if all was still within, — he heard nothing but the hard breathing of the sleepers, and the indistinct sounds of those who murmured in their dreams. But to the Count's quick and apprehensive conscience there appeared to be voices within which talked beneath their breath of strange and terrible things, — “perhaps,” thought he, “they do relate their dreams to one another; a vision of horrors, and so being comforted, they will address themselves to sleep again;” or was it merely his fancy gave him the alarm? When he looked around, fearing that some one overlooked him, he imagined strange shadows beckoned to him in each gloom; his fears peopled the mountain depths, and the recesses of each woody vista with unnatural forms, and in the babbling wind he

he heard their airy tongues in that solitary hour.

He stood at the door of the cottage,—he had bent to raise the latch. He knew full well the inhabitants of it trusted to the well known honest character of the country for their security. Here was no precaution taken against the midnight robber and assassin;—its inmates had laid themselves down to sleep in innocence and in security; they were not conscious of harming, nor possessed even with the wish of disturbing the repose of their greatest enemy, who now stood at their gate;—they were at peace with all the world, and they reposed themselves in the conviction, that the world was their friend, and in the confidence that they should again witness the morning's blessed light. The Count had not courage to raise the latch of their hospitable door;—that threshold was
never

never yet crossed but by friendly feet: he had but to knock and awake them; they would minister to his wants—pour comfort into his afflicted spirits—supply him with their choicest food, and chafe his benumbed and frozen limbs before their hospitable hearth. They would be bountiful and lavish in their giving—yea, and feel themselves honoured by his taking.

While these thoughts crossed his mind, and prevented his passing the doorway, the necessity of taking their lives troubled him. A passing sound, which resembled that sad ditty which told of the misfortunes of his house, struck his ear. It was Christina, who, for an instant, warbled in her sleep. It was a faint and momentary sound; yet it fired a train of quick assembling thoughts, which roused the devil that slumbered in his heart. He rolled his eye in quest of some obscure and unfrequented

frequented passage,—such as became a *murderer* to steal through. In the back part of the cottage he observed a little wooden shutter a few feet from the ground, which he had no doubt opened into one of the bed rooms. He advanced towards it rapidly and placed his foot in one of the interstices between the logs which formed the cottage,—he was startled by a tall shadow which played on part of the cottage near him. He turned his head without moving from his position, and was relieved from his fears by observing that it was cast by one solitary pine which grew beside the cottage, and whose taper summit was now and then bowed by the passing breeze. The little shutter yielded to the pressure of his hand, and in a moment he felt himself on the flooring of a small chamber ;—he heard in a corner of the room the heavy breathings of one who slumbered ;

slumbered ; the light was faint and only enabled him to distinguish a small bed. The face of the sleeper he could not distinguish, but it was sufficient for him that it was *an Olof* who slept there ; that peaceful slumber too which denoted the innocent mind troubled him, and he wished speedily to end it. He placed his hand upon his poignard and was about to advance ;—he prepared himself to become the agent of destruction when he was withheld ;—he felt himself fearfully enthralled by a dread which shook his guilty soul with acute horror. He feared to cope with the powers of heaven, who watch and guard the pillows of the just. Was it to be permitted to him to roll backward in their course the inscrutable and irresistible decrees of destiny ? Was he to oppose the immutable and predestinated course of events, and say to the ocean of future years rolling

rolling dimly onward, with this arm will I stay thee—thus far shalt thou come and no farther? The terrible conflict of his soul shewed that he feared to be thwarted by the interference of the all powerful, if he dared to raise his arm against the beloved of God. He writhed and shook with fear at the bare idea of a struggle between flesh and spirit. While he advanced across the chamber, cold drops stood on his brow, and his knees knocked against each other. He passed his hand across the bed hastily, and it rested upon something warm and fleshy; he felt it, and knew then it was the face of the sleeper. Without a moment's delay, this horrid assassin doubled the pillow down upon it—he crushed it—there was not a groan. After a faint shuddering of the flesh beneath, all was still; he felt that forehead again; it was cold, and
the

the sleeper now reposed in death. The murderer stole out of the chamber, but he dared not look behind him—he feared to meet that face which had struggled beneath his bloody hands. He passed along a dark passage which led into the few rooms which the cottage contained. He took the first door which presented itself; this room was very dark;—he was directed by the breathing of his victim to the spot where it lay. The terror which shook his frame, shewed the visions which his guilty conscience had conjured up. There was an owl that roosted in the old timbers of the cottage roof, which, uttering a dismal scream, flitted from its hiding place. The Count started, and that note sounded in his ears like the blood avenging spirit's voice, whose dark pinions moved above his unblest and sacrilegious head. He felt the position of the sleeper, and then struck

him, as he thought, through the heart, with his poignard ; but the awakening cry of the sleeper, and the sudden bounding upon his feet of his active form, while he dashed upon the floor the trembling frame of the wretched Count, and sought to grapple in the darkness with his midnight foe, smote the miserable man with indescribable horror ; he knew the voice, he recognized him by that cry, and he now was filled with more horror at the thought, that in his ignorance the son might murder the father ; then he felt, when he knew by the voice of Adolphus that it was in his son's heart he sought to bury his steel. The Count essayed to speak—his heart was bursting ; he felt the torture of the damned, when he found he could utter no sound of suffering—give no relief to his agony, which swelled his heart and beat strong in every pulse. The arm of Adolphus smote

smote him rudely;—and now he seized the dagger which his father had dropped, and was about.

“Hold!” exclaimed the Count with difficulty. “Do not murder your wretched father!”

“Horror! horror!” cried Adolphus. “Awake, awake,—Olof, Ulrica!”

“Do not, Adolphus, do not let these hated names disturb me in my dying hour.—Yes, I am dying, my dear son;—I feel death in every nerve. Yet, driven by Olof, would I die;—I could not now abide his look!”

Adolphus threw himself beside the Count.—The thought of his father attempting his life, and now dying, perhaps from a blow inflicted by a son’s hand, filled him with unutterable horror. He raised his father from the floor, and placed him on his own bed.

His cries alarmed Olof, Ulrica, and Carl. They came into the chamber of Adolphus with lights, and were filled with terror at the emotion which Adolphus expressed,—and with grief and pity, when they approached the bed and recognized in the wretched being who lay upon it, the Count Magnus Mörner. They viewed with wonder that miserable and ragged dress which he wore.—His wild and miserable looks possessed no traces of that manly and spirited countenance which once was his; and the accomplished and illustrious nobleman could never be recognized in the ragged and half starved wretch who lay before them. The features of his face were affected by a slight convulsive spasm, which denoted the immediate approach of death. His eyes were averted from the Olof family, and were fixed on those of Adolphus, with whom they

they seemed to hold private converse, and to remind him of his last request. The son hung with haggard looks over him; and while he sought for some explanation of this fatal and extraordinary occurrence, he was pleased to observe that pleasure appeared to be the sensation with which his father regarded him.

Adolphus besought Ulrica to prepare something to recover the Count; but the Count, who felt the power of death upon him, made a slight motion of his hand expressive of his repugnance. With great difficulty he said, “ I am dying;—I would not live if I
 “ could. Nature is exhausted and
 “ spent. For the last twenty-four
 “ hours I have not tasted food;—but
 “ it is the violence of my passion
 “ which destroys me, and the shock
 “ occasioned by great and overpower-
 “ ing emotion. Adolphus, let not
 “ your

“ your look accuse me.—I had no
“ intention to murder you; but why
“ did not you avoid this fatal place?
“ —for here twice you were near
“ falling a victim to. . . my hatred of
“ the Olofs.—Aye, Olof, you never
“ injured me, and yet I hated you!—
“ It was my fate. If you would see
“ the effects of it, visit the next
“ chamber,—and even from the grave
“ I cry, I *hate* thee now!”

“ Oh, horrible!” cried Adolphus;
“ do not in your dying hour. . . .”

Ulrica now returned from the adjoining chamber and interrupted Adolphus with her screams of horror; and when she had acquainted them with the dreadful death of Chistina, he felt the full horror of his situation. It was now but too evident what had been the intentions of his father. He recollected the last time that the Count had visited the cottage accompanied
by

by Rezzonico, and he was forced to conclude from his wretched father's present attempt to destroy them, that he must have been privy to the former. He could not help being struck with the extraordinary interference of Providence in his behalf; and, in the midst of his sorrows, it afforded him some glimmering of hope to find himself not totally neglected by all-seeing Heaven.

Carl, who now approached the bed, the moment he beheld the countenance of the Count, started back and cried, "Merciful God!—it is the miserable wretch I saved from the flood this very evening!"

"Peace!" exclaimed Axel. "Let him at least die in peace! may God forgive him, as I do!"

The violence of Ulrica's grief for the untimely end of Christina, choaked her utterance. She knelt down in a

remote corner of the chamber; and her broken and half-suppressed sobs shewed that her grief for the departed mingled with her prayers to Heaven to support her under her afflictions.

Axel and Carl stood at the Count's feet, contemplating the most repulsive and horrid image which mortality can offer,—a death-bed of guilt and despair! The wretched man lay in pain upon a pillow which was not smoothed by penitence. He was abandoned by religion, which tranquillizes the sufferer,—and by hope, which lifts the veil which covers the bright and glorious prospects of immortality.

Adolphus supported the head of his dying father; and while he leaned over him and watched his dim eyes, to catch some sign of prayer or token of repentance, he pointed with his raised arm and with expressive gesture, to that Heaven above, where he
would

would fain direct his father's eye, as a signal of his trust and belief. The eye of the Count remained unmoved: whether he had no longer sense to discern the movements of those who surrounded him, or disregarded the admonition of Adolpbus, is uncertain. In a few minutes his body suffered a general convulsion,—and his face was changed into a spectacle too hideous and terrible for contemplation,—an expression which it retained even after death had terminated his dreadful sufferings, and when his despairing eye was closed in the chambers of the grave.

When the Count had breathed his last, Axel exclaimed, “Oh! God!
 “mysterious and wonder-working are
 “thy ways! He, who would have de-
 “stroyed me and mine, has dyed his
 “hands in his own blood!—Let those
 “who hear the tale of your woes avoid
 “the

“ the dark passion of hatred.—Let
“ them seek their happiness and pros-
“ perity rather by eradicating from
“ their hearts the seeds of evil pas-
“ sions, than by seeking to gratify
“ them by the destruction of their
“ objects.—And, above all, let them
“ oppose the first advances of vice.—
“ Let that man tremble the moment
“ that he first conceives an unwar-
“ rantable dislike for any human be-
“ being : for he knows not but such a
“ passion may terminate awfully, and
“ set in blood !”

“ Thus die,” exclaimed Adolphus,
“ and thus be extinguished with thee,
“ my father, that dark vindictive spi-
“ rit to which you fell a victim !”

The sun rose and threw his bright rays upon the melancholy group which surrounded the body of the Count. Axel observed to Adolphus, that it was fitting that the body of the deceased
Court

Count should be forthwith borne to the vault of the Mörners, in Riddarholmen. Adolphus started at that sound. *Riddarholmen* conjured up all his woes, and set them in dark array before him. It was his wish to follow the body of the deceased Count to the grave, and pay the last rite to the departed with due honour; but the White Cross Knights, by whom he was denounced, commanded all the approaches of the castle, and opposed an insurmountable obstacle to his wish. On hearing the objection of Adolphus, Axel quickly removed it, by informing the young Count of the strange things which Carl reported respecting that terrible confederacy of the White Cross Knights: "And Prince Charles," said Axel, "by the desire of Tigerhielm, " is coming onward at the head of his " troops, to assist the chief in reducing those who mutinied, into sub-
 n 6 "jection,

“ jection, and to seal at Riddarholmen
“ the solemn covenant which secures
“ the toleration and freedom of our
“ country on its ancient basis. This
“ way the Prince comes in his route
“ to Riddarholmen.—The barks of
“ the peasants will assemble here at
“ sun-rise, to convey his troops across
“ the lake, and—hark! already the
“ notes of their martial music is
“ wafted over the tops of the moun-
“ tains!”

The words of Axel imparted a consolation to Adolphus, for which he could not account; and even in the midst of the terrific spectacles which surrounded him, he nourished the germ of hope. He resolved, after he had attended the remains of the Count to Riddarholmen, to bid a long farewell to his country,—to bury in his own heart the memory of his sorrows, —and to still them by rushing into the
bustle

bustle of some strange and stirring mode of existence,—to banish himself to some distant shore, remote from the circle of those who were familiar with his name and acquainted with his misfortunes; and thus to get rid at once of the contempt of those who did not feel, and of the condolence of those who only affected to do so. -

CHAR. XVIII.

What shall he be 'ere night?—perchance a thing
O'er which the raven flaps 'ner funeral wing :
By his closed eye unheeded and unfelt,
While sets that sun, and dews of evening melt,
Chill wet, and misty round each stiffened limb,
Refreshing earth, reviving all but him !

LORD BYRON'S CORSAIR.

THE boats which were to convey the troops of Prince Charles to Riddarholmen now lined the strand—the yellow haired peasants thronged the beach in busy groups: the bustle of each gallant crew; the shifting of the sails; the harsh noise of the tackling; and the merry notes with which they hailed the rising sun, increased the animation of the picture. At a considerable distance the long line of soldiery

diery might be discerned by the glittering of their arms, as they descended the road which wound among the distant hills; their martial music was carried by fits upon the breeze, and was replied to by the faint echoes of the lake.

The bodies of the Count and Christina were placed on a platform, and borne in silence to the boat. The merry groups ceased their song, but it was only for a moment, while the dead were passing. Their eyes were filled with indifference while they gazed upon the bier. Those cold hearts, which but a few hours before, throbbed with hopes and fears; the countenance of hardened guilt—and that of beauty, which wears its loveliness even in death; the haughty blood too, of a long and illustrious line, all were viewed with mute indifference. From the contemplation of the Count's face

as

as it lay uncovered on the bier, each one as it passed seemed to recoil involuntarily, and no one dared to look upon it twice.

Adolphus, accompanied by all the family of the Olofs, and by the weeping orphan Eric, Christina's child, embarked in the boat in which the bodies were placed. In silence they departed from the shore, and silently the funeral bark proceeded on its way. Adolphus struggled to conceal the outward signs of grief, but his heart was heavy, and a stupor oppressed him, and almost bound up his faculties. He scarcely remarked the extraordinary circumstance of Christina's remains accompanying the body of his father to the family burying vault; and when he noticed it, he could not summon up sufficient energy to require from Axel an explanation of it. He resigned himself passively to that chastising

chastising God who smote him : and he endeavoured with patience and resignation to endure the visitation of his father's sins. When they crossed the lake, and arrived at the village of Nerlunda, they found it necessary to procure some peasants to assist them in bearing the dead to Riddarholmen. Adolphus recognized the inhospitable place from whence he was driven, with a want of charity uncommon in Sweden. He averted his looks from the village churls, as they passed. He sighed at the bitter reflection that their apology was to be found in the vices and crimes of the tyrants of his race. The awful circumstance of their lord's death should have extinguished that hatred which they endeavoured to extend beyond the limits of the grave. His cold remains were treated with neglect and indignity ; and that brave and virtuous peasantry, who would have

have covered themselves with mourning, and followed with tears a virtuous master to the grave, were not to be won with entreaties or bribes, to assist in bearing to the tomb of his ancestors the clay-cold form of the once redoubted and terrible Mörner.

Such was the end of a tyrant! and it is thus that the expression of strong passion, when felt by the vulgar and uneducated, is often rudely demonstrated. But the feeling predominates in all on the death of such a man, and justly too; whether the exertion of his arbitrary sway is confined to the humble circle of his domestics, extends over the narrow capacities of terrified village hinds, or is dignified with the attributes of power, and emanates from the dazzling but more oppressive circle of a court. A few strangers who sojourned in the village were procured to attend on the bier, and when
this

this mournful procession passed through the hamlet, a few frighted faces were discovered clustering behind the casements, or only partly seen within the half-opened doors; with an expression of horror and reproach, which might have been elicited by the sight of some wretched malefactor's body after suffering the forfeit of his crimes—as scantily attended too; for even such as these are followed by her, the wife or mother, whose tenderness, not guilt nor crime can quench—but still follows that lone mourner, dwelling on him whom she loved and honoured; and bedewing that body with her tears which love so great, and tenderness so exquisite, have redeemed from the useless profanation of a severity carried beyond the precincts of the grave.

When they advanced along the avenue which led to the castle of Riddarholmen,

darholmen, Adolphus was roused from his grief by the din of arms. Adolphus advanced towards the abbey, and was immediately conducted to the quarters of Tigerhielm. He was informed by the chief of all those occurrences which we have already laid before the reader, and when Adolphus mentioned to him the death of the Count of Mörner, he seemed affected in a very powerful manner by the intelligence. He threw his arms round Adolphus, and pressed him to his heart. Adolphus could not divine the cause of this strange emotion. He looked again upon that terrible being; he was about to demand an explanation, but his eye sunk overpowered by the stern character of his countenance. Tigerhielm was beginning to communicate to Adolphus matters of great import, when he was interrupted by the sudden arrival of one of the knights

knights, who informed him that Wildebrand had violated the treaty they were about to celebrate.

It appears that Tigerhielm and the knights had blockaded Wildebrand and his party so strictly, that they were on the point of perishing with hunger in those subterraneous recesses in which they had taken refuge. At this juncture, Wildebrand discovered in the interior of the turret, which was situated in the cavern they had possession of, the secret of that philosopher's stone, which was the source of the immense wealth which Tigerhielm lavished in the prosecution of their design, and which so much excited the astonishment of the White Cross Knights. A deep and secret flight of steps, which Wildebrand accidentally discovered, led him to an immense depth under the foundation of the turret; at the bottom of these steps
he

he found an iron door, which, with great difficulty, he broke through; beyond this door a passage led him into a vast and natural treasury, in which the riches of the earth had been accumulating for ages. We have alluded to that part of the mine which was wasted for many years by hidden fire. Under this great crucible, which contained veins of gold ore of amazing richness, the streams of molten gold had deposited themselves, and in the flood of liquid treasure, which here presented itself, the most craving and avaricious miser among mankind might find food even to satiety. Wildebrand invited his companions to this spectacle, and they loaded themselves with such quantities of the precious metal, which was in a condensed state, that they could scarcely move under their spoil.

The Laplander was set at liberty on this

this discovery, but the anxiety of poor Hernulf to make his escape to his master, was the cause of an event of great importance to the besieged. He was discovered in the act of removing a stone which covered a fissure in the rock, through which a secret passage communicated under ground with the castle of Riddarholmen. Enchanted with his discovery, Wildebrand determined to amuse Tigerhielm with a prospect of his immediate surrender, while he and his troops should occupy themselves in attempting to escape with their booty.

Wildebrand and his associates had just been driven back behind the ramparts of the castle, down the sides of which they were secretly descending, and their flag of defiance now waved from the battlements of the chief tower of the castle, while, with their small arms,

arms, they dislodged all assailants who approached them.

The troops of Prince Charles were advancing, and Tigerhielm felt anxious to signalize himself in reducing these rash spirits to subjection ere the Prince should witness the disgrace to which his own instruments exposed him; but a danger that awakened all the terrible feelings of his heart now menaced Adolphus. A peril to which she was exposed, who was his by that terrible double tie from which his mind recoiled with horror. Tigerhielm participated in this feeling of Adolphus, and so strongly, that he ordered the artillery not to play upon the tower, lest a random shot might injure that part of the building in which Edda was concealed. All the hopes which Adolphus entertained upon this melancholy subject were placed upon Olaf and Conrad, who might, if she remained

remained undiscovered by the besieged . until midnight, remove her from her . perilous situation. The troops under the command of Prince Charles were now encamped under the walls of the castle, but his royal highness had acceded to the request of Tigerhielm, that they should take no part in ~~the~~ contest between the White Cross Knights. On either side, they reposed on their arms in perfect stillness until the hour of midnight should arrive, when darkness would facilitate Edda's escape.

Midnight at length approached, and with a beating heart Adolphus accompanied Tigerhielm to their advanced post. The night was still and cloudless, and in deep silence the knights made preparations for the approaching assault. There was a sentinel placed on every flank who watched the dark tower. No light twinkled through its

portholes, and from the silence that reigned it might be deemed that those who had taken refuge there had fled, if the watch had not been so strict. Midnight struck, and Tigerhielm gazed restless and agitated upon the stars. "Look upwards Adolphus," exclaimed he. "the star of Mörner brightens, while mine. . . . Oh God ! it has the "redness of blood !"

The attention of Adolphus was drawn from Tigerhielm's observations by a strange bustle in the courts of Riddarholmen, and a shriek, which he trembled to think was Edda's, reached his ear,—Tigerhielm heard it also. "Throw out there quick some balls of Greek fire," exclaimed the Chief, "let us see whether these heroes make war upon women !"

In a moment the blue light of the fire-balls tinged every object around, and along the battlements of that gloomy

gloomy tower several of the besieged knights in their coats of dark mail were seen running in disorder. One of them bore in his arms a form of dazzling whiteness; the contour of her figure resembled Edda, and the lifeless hanging of her limbs shewed that she had fainted."

" Oh God !" exclaimed Adolphus, " it is she !" he could utter no more ; but, with a desperate resolution, was rushing forward, when Tigerhielm exclaimed, " stop that maniac who would destroy himself, the last of an illustrious line !"

Adolphus was held down by main force by several knights, pursuant to the orders of Tigerhielm. The besiegers commenced firing against the lower part of the tower, but Tigerhielm instantly ordered it to cease, on account of the danger of its taking fire, as their magazine of powder was

placed underneath that tower. The clashing of swords was now heard in the direction of the tower; fire-balls were again thrown out, and a man was perceived fighting with the besieged, and bearing Edda in his arms. He moved along the battlements in despite of their opposing weapons; ~~but now~~ those who intently gazed upon that sight beheld him droop with weakness. "I will advance to his assistance," cried Tigerhielm, "but at your peril let no one follow me; this is a service of danger!"

It was Conrad who had watched over Edda's safety; but the besieged were too watchful to allow him to succeed in effecting her escape. The moment they beheld them emerging from the secret apartments they descended and bore the affrighted Edda from his protection. Conrad was made prisoner by them, but he seized an opportunity which

which the negligence of his guards gave him; he sprang from their grasp, and arming himself with one of their weapons which he snatched, he rushed forward and seized Edda's almost lifeless form. **H**e fought against Wildebrand, who was his chief assailant, with a vigour which was animated by revenge and despair; and when, choaked with passion, Wildebrand ordered him to surrender, or he should no longer spare him, Conrad threw from his forehead the band which covered the terrific inscription, and bade him read there his answer and his fate. When the word *death* met the eyes of Wildebrand, he trembled, and recognized *that Conrad* whom in early life he had disgraced.

Edda, whom Conrad still bore on one arm while he fought with the other, had saved him from suffering from the utmost exertions of his ene-
 . o 3 . mics ;

mies; but the word was now given no longer to spare even her; for Conrad, while their swords fell so lightly on his breast of mail, had descended several flights of stairs which wound within the tower: and as the number of his adversaries, who followed him in his flight, only encumbered each other in the pursuit, it was possible that he might reach some door which communicated with the body of the castle, and thus baffle their attempts, by reaching some of the remote chambers of that extensive building; from whence he might easily escape over the ramparts to the camp of his friends. Passing one of the loop-holes of the tower, the combatants were arrested by a terrible voice, which called from the outside door of the fortress, "Hold! or perish!" Each arm fell unnerved, and each bosom was thrilled with fear at that sound. Wildebrand thrust his
"head

head through the port-hole and beheld Tigerhielm who stood upon the ground under the walls of the tower; he held in one hand a lighted match, and in the other a train of wildfire.

“Wildebrand!” cried Tigerhielm,
 “I have sworn to deliver Edda, or
 “perish in the attempt: hear me,
 “therefore, and hear all ye recreant
 “knights who never heard me talk in
 “vain. I have fixed this train in our
 “powder magazine, which is depo-
 “sited under the foundations of this
 “tower. It will take exactly five mi-
 “nutes to kindle the magazine and
 “blow you all piecemeal to heaven.
 “I have barricaded the door of the
 “tower on the outside. You cannot
 “therefore descend in time to escape.
 “I now *light the train* with the match.
 “—Deliver up Edda, and I stamp
 “out the burning train with my foot.
 “—Disobey the orders of your chief,

“ who now commands you to set her
“ free, and he will never be disgraced
“ by rebellion again; for here he comes
“ to perish with you !”

The heart of each soldier shrunk at these dreadful words ; they looked out and beheld the train rapidly consuming, while Tigerhielm stood with calm intrepidity awaiting their answer. Several of the soldiers attempted to make their escape, and dreaded to await the fearful crisis, while others lingered to carry with them their precious spoil, and thus lost the time which was so much more valuable to them. The soldiers paid no attention to Conrad and Edda, who, from the moment the voice of Tigerhielm was heard in parley, endeavoured to make good their escape. Wildebrand remained still at the port-hole. “ I swear by all that’s sacred,” replied he, “ to set Edda free.—Call
“ to the sentinels of the watch for a
“ scaling

“ scaling ladder, and we will not molest her in her descent !”

“ You swear this upon your solemn oath, and on the faith of a true knight ?” exclaimed Tigerhielm.

“ Upon my oath I swear, and by a true knight’s faith,” returned Wildebrand, “ and now extinguish the train !”

“ To the words of the brave I give faith,” cried Tigerhielm ; “ even thus then I extinguish the train !”

“ Is it quite extinguished ?” demanded Wildebrand.

“ Entirely,” replied Tigerhielm.

“ Thus then I thank you,” cried Wildebrand, who rested his harquebuss on the embrasure and shot Tigerhielm through the body.

Several knights, who had followed their chief at a distance, in defiance of his orders, ran up to the spot where he fell, on hearing the report of the har-

quebuss. Wildebrand exulted in the savage revenge he had taken. He pointed out to his soldiers the body of the chief, and the extinguished train. "It is thus," cried Wildebrand, "we have revenged our injuries.—We may now rest in safety, even over the powder magazine; for there is not another Tigerhielm in their camp."

The soldiers were re-assured by these words; and several returned when in the act of letting themselves drop from the battlements, and they cheerfully obeyed the orders of Wildebrand, who commanded them not to molest the knights who bore away Tigerhielm to his tent; but to search the lower rooms of the tower for the fugitives Conrad and Edda, who had escaped from their sight during the confusion of the last few moments.

Wildebrand and his companions
"were

were on the brink of a precipice at this very moment, when they abandoned themselves to the wildest excesses, and indulged in the loudest demonstrations of joy at their triumph. A slumbering spark, a thread of fire, almost too minute for the organs of sense to detect, yet lived in that fatal train. Its progress, as it crept along the extended train, was slow and invisible—but it soon exhibited its fatal effects. Within the tower the besieged had found a store of provisions and wine; and these famished men now made amends for their long fast. After the most accurate search, they had not succeeded in discovering Conrad and Edda. They washed away the memory of their disappointment by large draughts of wine, and the noise of their songs and riotous mirth reached the ears of the sentinel of that mournful camp, which, by its silence demon-

o 6

strated .

strated its respect for its dying chieftain. Adolphus was bending over the body of Tigerhielm, who had been conveyed to the tent of Prince Charles, (which was nearer than his own,) and attentively watching the countenance of Father Laurentius, who was probing the wounds of his patient, when the dreadful explosion of the powder magazine attracted the attention of the whole camp. The curtains of the tent were drawn aside, and the wounded hero gazed upon the sight. The spectacle was grand, and even sublime. The dreadful thunder of the explosion, —the volume of red and bickering flame which streamed on the dark blue of heaven,—the burning ruins of that dark tower thrown high in the air, and then falling with a stunning noise upon the earth,—and with these the distinct appearance of each horrible remnant of life, such as the eye
of

of the nearest sentinel observed—the quivering trunk—the blasted limbs, and scattered members—and even the notes of that unnatural mirth, which the instantaneous death groan quenched, lingered long upon his ear.

Two figures were seen hastily advancing from the terrible fire to the tent of Prince Charles. It was the brave Conrad, who bore Edda to the tent, and who no sooner resigned his charge to Adolphus, than he fell upon the floor, covered with blood.

Edda, whom the late events had so much overpowered, as to render her nearly insensible, now unclosed her eyes languidly, and when she beheld Adolphus, in whose arms she lay, she exclaimed, “Oh God! it is he!—it is “ my husband!”

“ Oh! call me not by that fatal and “ terrible name!” said Adolphus, looking tenderly upon her.

“ Why;

“ Why, my lord?” cried Axel warmly, who had followed Edda into the tent; “ is it then true the report I have heard, that you have seduced this maid, and now desert her? are you not her husband?”

“ Oh God!” cried Adolphus, “ spare me—drive me not mad with horrors!—I adore her—aye, and it is true I married her—but, oh God! how shall I declare it? I am the husband of my own sister!”

Tigerhielm raised himself upon his couch at these extraordinary words; nor could the solicitations of Laurentius induce him to keep quiet.

Axel Olof fell on his knees, with joy painted on his countenance, “ I thank thee, oh my God!” cried he; “ thou hast not deserted me, nor brought the grey hairs of honourable age to shame!—and this young lord, whom I suspected of disgrac-
“ ing

“ing me and dishonouring *my child*,
 “he has been bowed to the earth
 “with sorrow, when I imagined he
 “was goaded by the sting of a bad
 “conscience. Oh no! may the guilt
 “of his father never come upon
 “him!”

“Great God!” cried Adolphus,
 “what means this joy? speak, Axel,
 “relieve me from this *curse*—tell me
 “I may hold this adorable woman in
 “my arms, and gaze on her without
 “horror!”

“Not a *curse*, but a *blessing* may
 “she prove,” replied Axel — “for
 “know that she is *my daughter*; a
 “descendant of that Ulrica, whose
 “*curse* can now no longer prevail
 “against your house. But you, my
 “lord, must have already expiated the
 “sins of your ancestors; your piety,
 “your benevolence, your youthful
 “sufferings, must have been a worthy
 “offering.

“ offering in the eyes of God ! and
“ must surely have disarmed heaven
“ of its vengeance !”

Axel, in a few words, explained this mystery to the delighted Adolphus. The Countess Eleonora, hitherto her, was never influenced by the unextinguished hatred of the Count towards Olof and his amiable family. She respected and esteemed the valuable qualities of these virtuous peasants, and her kindness was repaid by them with a fervour and devotedness, which was afterwards demonstrated by a remarkable sacrifice which they made to her peace of mind. The Countess had nearly sunk under her affliction, when deprived by her obdurate lord of the society and comfort of her first-born, and she concerted with Axel and his wife a plan to deceive the Count on the birth of her next child ; and to gratify those maternal feelings which pined for the frequent

frequent contemplation of its offspring. Ulrica had brought forth Edda nearly at the same time the Countess gave birth to Christina. The Countess prevailed upon Ulrica to substitute Edda for Christina. It was not the ambition of having their daughter splendidly adopted, so much as a wish arising in the hearts of these good peasants to alleviate, as far as they had power to do so, the miseries which had been entailed, through the means of their ancestor, on the Count's unfortunate family, which induced them to part with their child. Whenever the Countess arrived at Riddarholmen, she was always gratified by the regular visits of Christina; and the only bad consequence of these frequent estrangements from what she thought her parent's humble roof, was the opportunity it afforded Baron Kruzen of corrupting her romantic mind; whose death

death would have brought Christina in sorrow to the grave, if her father had not carried his fatal intention into effect. The accidental discovery of Edda's black cross, which Carl found in the abbey, where she had dropt it on the night of her marriage, convinced Axel, who recognized the cross as the very one he placed upon the neck of his infant daughter when he parted with her, that she had returned to her native country, and must have been in all probability in the neighbourhood of Ridderholmen. When Adolphus related to the Olofs the events of his life, the emotion of Axel and Ulrica betrayed their recognition of their own child, in the Edda whom Adolphus adored. But the indignation of Axel may be readily conceived, when a short time after Adolphus's last arrival at his cottage, he was informed by the Lutheran priest, that he had performed

performed the marriage ceremony which united Adolphus and Edda; for he drew in his own mind the conclusion that Adolphus would deny the the celebration of an imperfect ceremony, and had for ever abandoned his wife. When convinced too that she was the daughter of humble peasants, Axel feared that the prejudices of nobility might deprive his child of her happiness and honour, and disgrace the latter years of his existence.

Adolphus interrupted Axel's apology for procrastinating his explanation, owing to the reasons we have detailed, by exclaiming, "look up! awake! my Edda! my wife!" He tenderly clasped Edda, who had fainted, in his arms, and awoke her with fervent kisses.

Laurentius, who left Tigerhielm for a few moments, in order to examine Conrad's wound, pronounced it but a slight

slight contusion; he had received it from one of the burning fragments which fell upon him, as he escaped from one of the passages which led from the castle to the ramparts.

When Edda had nearly recovered from her swoon, Adolphus gently imparted to her the secret of her birth, and while she knelt to Olof and demanded his blessing, the enraptured Adolphus cried out, "Oh! would that Montbazon were present!—he alone is wanting to complete our happiness!"

A deep groan from Tigerhielm now attracted their attention. They approached his couch, and grouped themselves round it, looking anxiously upon him, dreading that he had breathed his last. He looked up to Adolphus, and his eyes were animated with a brighter expression. "I have now," exclaimed he, "a momentary respite

“ spite from suffering. Adolphus,
 “ unluck my helmet!, methinks it
 “ pains me!”

Adolphus carefully took off that terrible visor.

“ Oh heavens!” cried Adolphus, starting back, when he beheld the countenance which was concealed under it. “ Montbazou!!!”

“ Nay, dearer than that name; for
 “ know, Adolphus, I am Waldemar,
 “ thy uncle—the elder brother of your
 “ father, whom he sought to assassinate
 “ for his birth-right. Aye! Adolphus,
 “ ’tis true! A faithful servant, with
 “ whom I had exchanged habits for
 “ the purpose of flying in disguise be-
 “ yond the Baltic, was murdered by
 “ villains, who took him for his mas-
 “ ter. The tide of life is ebbing!
 “ and I would dedicate the few mo-
 “ ments which remain to you. Adol-
 “ phus, there is no longer hope! the
 “ star

“ star of thy early friend sets in blood !
“ and this evening’s dew will bathe
“ the green turf of his grave ! ‘Those
“ who speak in charity of me here-
“ after, must say, I ever lived for
“ others, rather than for myself—and
“ in the cause of general good I pe-
“ rished. If I have brought woe upon
“ my country, and caused its mothers
“ to weep, it was to secure the free-
“ dom of her sons. And if in the
“ means of performing this great deed
“ I may not have been entirely jus-
“ tified, let censure be stilled by re-
“ flecting, that my life fell a sacrifice
“ by the hands of my own guilty in-
“ struments !”

The chief was interrupted by the appearance of several of the White Cross Knights at the door of the tent, who came and inquired affectionately how he felt after the dressing of his wound. (Tigerhielm ordered them to be

be admitted within the tent, and when he saw their surprise at discovering Montbazon in the habiliments of their chief, he exclaimed, “ yes, my friends, “ ’tis that despised Montbazon, who “ excited your admiration and almost “ your idolatry, by adopting a simple “ means of deceiving your under- “ standings, which enthusiasm had “ warmed and superstition weakened! “ You rejected a man of simple cou- “ rage and plain words—you imagin- “ ed that great effects required mar- “ vellous means—you expected a “ chief who had won from mysterious “ nature her secrets—your imagina- “ tions were fired, and ye believed “ that the wonders of old time were “ to be renewed for the benefit of “ your conversion. Ye would not “ believe, unless one rose from the “ dead . . . I saw your weakness, and “ took advantage of it. From an ex- “ tensive

“ tensive knowledge of chemistry,
“ possessed the means of discovering
“ a wonderful seat of riches in the
“ bowels of the earth, which enabled
“ me to make ye believe I was pos-
“ sessed of the secret of the philoso-
“ pher’s stone. It is described in my
“ papers, addressed to Adolphus, now
“ Count of Mörner, and his share of
“ the treasure will again raise his fa-
“ mily to splendour. My acquaint-
“ tance with all the secret ways of
“ this place, which I had often ram-
“ bled through when a child, gave me
“ the means of surprising you with my
“ sudden approaches. A Laplander
“ who was placed by a confidant of
“ my brother’s (a wretch of the name
“ of Herman) to feed a miserable
“ captive in one of the vaults, assisted
“ me in the labours of my mystery ;
“ and as his tongue had been cut out
“ by my brother’s orders to prevent
“ him

“ him betraying *his* secret, he was
 “ well adapted. for the keeping of
 “ *mine*. I have, however, in this
 “ deed, only taken the advantage
 “ which strong minds are enabled to
 “ exercise over weak ones. I have
 “ done my duty (without injuring
 “ any one) to you all—and sought to
 “ please you after your own fashion.
 “ My strength is flowing fast....
 “ Adolphus, let not your mind be
 “ weakened by useless credulity. There
 “ is nothing miraculous has occurred
 “ to you, which I cannot explain.
 “ I assumed the disguise of the wan-
 “ dering Jew at Leipzig, for the pur-
 “ pose of discovering whether Wilde-
 “ brand possessed any vice which
 “ might disqualify him from becoming
 “ the husband of Edda. You recol-
 “ lect the gambling transaction which
 “ opened my eyes, and saved her from
 “ becoming affianced to a villain. I
 perceived

“ perceived from the state of your
“ mind, that you were easily affected
“ by miraculous events. I had reason
“ to believe that the letter directed
“ to my brother, which I was in-
“ formed you kept carefully conceal-
“ ed, contained the secret of my be-
“ ing still alive. It was of the ut-
“ most importance to my safety that
“ my brother should remain ignorant
“ of my existence. Your vigilance
“ frustrated my attempt; but I had
“ reason to believe after my arrival in
“ Sweden, that my brother derived
“ no such information from that letter.
“ Chance discovered to me Wilde-
“ brand’s design of having you assassi-
“ nated, and I assumed the Jew’s
“ habit to give a more impressive
“ effect to that warning which saved
“ your life. You beheld me crossing
“ your chamber at Cronberg—for I
“ was that vision who endeavoured to
“ awaken

“awaken repentance in your father’s
“bosom; and it was, I also who
“crossed the chamber of Arvedina,
“in my way from the turret of Olaus;
“for the sound of your voice had
“reached my retreat and given me
“cause of alarm. ’Twas my voice
“murmured in the anti-room your
“name—a simple exclamation of sur-
“prise on discovering that the stranger
“Olaus harboured was Adolphus. It
“suited not with my plan to make
“you a member of our confederacy
“at that time when the power of
“Montbazón was declining . . . Alas!
“I am very faint. . . and yet a few
“more words! for I wish that when
“the hero dies the philosopher may
“live. The transformation of my
“features and my voice was partly ef-
“fected by the helmet, and by an
“elixir of sovereign power, which, by
“a chemical process. . . . Oh God!”

Here the chief fell backward on his couch, and a torrent of blood gushed from his throat.

“Oh heaven! I must clasp him ’ere he dies,” cried a female from an inner division of the tent.

Prince Charles came forward, and in vain endeavoured to prevent her approach. A majestic stature, and a countenance divine, even in years, proclaimed her the Princess Albertina, the beloved of Waldemar, whose attachment nor years nor sufferings had abated. The exiled Waldemar, had believed, unfortunately, in the accounts of her inconstancy, which his brother first propagated. But when Montbazon discovered himself to Prince Charles, who had always been his friend, the prince acquainted his favourite sister with the return of Waldemar, and she had accompanied her brother with the intention of joining him

him at Riddarholmen. While the good monk was endeavouring to relieve the chief, the Princess stopped opposite Conrad, and gave a loud shriek : those who surrounded her imagined the fatal inscription on his brow had caused it. But she pointed to a mark on his neck which was stript for the purpose of dressing the wound, and exclaimed, “ It is he!—the indelible sign ! with
 “ which I marked my son ere they
 “ stole him from me ! Oh God ! this
 “ unfortunate is my long lost son !

The Princess threw herself beside Conrad, who saw himself with surprise acknowledged by his illustrious parent. The child had been dragged from the arms of its mother by the satellites of Prince Eric, and was, when grown up, sold by that barbarian to an officer who was recruiting for one of the Princes of Germany.

The chief had recovered from the
 . P 3 . effects .

effects of so fatal a loss of blood; but his dissolution was now hourly expected.

Towards morning the sentinels of the outposts sent in a prisoner whom they intercepted in making his escape. It was Herman, who had concealed himself in the ruins of the abbey until hunger forced him to go forth. When he entered the tent, he started back at the sight of the wounded chief, who recalled to his recollection the countenance of that Waldemar, whose murder lay so heavy on his conscience; but when informed it was Waldemar himself, his gloomy brow was cleared, and he threw himself on his knees, and asked pardon for the attempt he had made on his life. Waldemar looked kindly on him, but he had lost the power of speech. He made a sign to Adolphus, signifying that he should extend

extend mercy to Herman: Herman now clung to the knees of Adolphus, who raised him with assurances of pardon, and demanded who was the aged prisoner who had been discovered in the abbey vaults. Herman replied, that he was the eldest son of the Prince De Zaremberg, whom the Count had immured in a dungeon, on discovering his intrigue with the Countess. Having been taken in an attempt to escape from the cloister prisons where Adolphus had been confined, he was, by the orders of Count Mörner, consigned to that iron cage, where he was discovered by Adolphus. We shall anticipate his fate by observing, that he was recovered by the skill of Laurentius, and proved a consolation to the declining Prince in his grief for the abandoned life and awful end of Wildebrand.

Day now began to dawn; yet the group of mourners had not quitted the couch of the warrior.

There was a passing bell now tolled in the castle; and old Olaus came forth to inform Adolphus of the death of his mother. He gave free scope to the tears which this event drew from him; but they were the last tears which grief caused him to shed for many years.

Adolphus signed the covenant with Prince Charles, which gave religious freedom to his country, and the dying hero kissed it with a smile of happiness, which was the last token of sensibility which beamed on his countenance. He felt his extremities waxing cold; and he made a sign that the White Cross Knights should elevate his body upon a bier, formed by their harquebusses, resting on each other's shoulders. They gently raised him as
he

he directed, and bore him into the open air, in order that he might die in the midst of warriors.

The afflicted Princess and Prince Charles, Adolphus and Edda, Conrad, Olaus, and the Olofs, followed him through the ranks of the White Cross Knights, in silent grief. The dim eyes of the hero gazed sternly upon the ruins of the tower, and upon the dark remains of his foes. He viewed the glittering array and dazzling front of the soldiery, and he seemed loath to withdraw his eye from that prospect which grew fainter and fainter to his vision; —but he averted them from the sight of his brother's corse which was exposed for some time to view: and it was remarked that it was placed between those sterile and blasted firs, the gloomy memorials of the crimes of his ancestors, which were the only mourning

mourning figures which surrounded it. When the sun stood over the hills and glowed in the lake—the hero breathed his last sigh!—

The soldiers who were busied in conveying from the ruins of the tower the heaps of the dead,—those who bore the body of the Countess to the abbey to lay it in state,—and they who were lowering the coffins of the Count Magnus, and his daughter Christina, into their silent grave, — paused a moment from their toil, and gave a tear to the memory of that extraordinary man.

The peasants, whom so many strange occurrences had drawn from their homes around the castle, joined in the general affliction. They looked with wonder and amazement upon that strange scene, and upon that hard bed of death, but. . . their attention was soon attracted by another object, which
filled

filled them with still greater astonishment: they beheld the beams of the sun streaming upon that black land—and gilding with the flood of his glory—the dark towers and spires of Riddarholmen Castle!

NOTE I.

Evil Nornies.—Page 2.

“ Near the fountain, which is under the ash,
 “ stands a very beautiful city, wherein dwell
 “ three virgins named *Urda*, or the PAST; *Ver-*
 “ *dandi*, or the PRESENT, *Skulda*, or the FU-
 “ TURE. These are they who dispense the ages
 “ of men: they are called *Nornies*, that is, fairies
 “ or destinies. But there are indeed a great
 “ many others besides these, who assist at the
 “ birth of every child, to determine its fate.
 “ Some are of celestial origin; others descend
 “ from the genii; and others from the dwarfs:
 “ as it is said in these verses ‘ there are *Nornies*
 “ of different originals: some proceed from the
 “ gods, some from the genii, and others from
 “ dwarfs.’ Then, says Gangler, ‘ if these Nor-
 “ nies dispense the destinies of men, they are
 “ very unequal in their distribution; for some
 “ are fortunate and wealthy; others acquire
 “ neither riches nor honours; some come to a
 “ good old age, while others die in their prime
 “ of life.’ Har answers, ‘ the *Nornies*, who are
 “ sprung of a good origin, are good themselves,
 “ and dispense good destinies: but those men
 “ to whom misfortunes happen, ought to ascribe
 “ them

“ them to the evil *Nornies* or *fairies*,”—*The 8th fable of the Edda*, page 51.

Mallet, in his note on this passage, in his “*Northern Antiquities*,” observes, “ Here we have a complete theory of fairyism. In this passage of the *Edda* we have the bud and germ (as it were) of what the ancient romances and popular superstitions have so widely branched and applied to such a variety of things ”

It is supposed that the *Nornæ* of the *Edda* are the same with the *Weird Sisters* so famous in Gothic history and romance. The conjecture is plausible, and may be supported on the following authority:—the word *Fyrð*, signifies *fatum*, *fortuna*, &c. — Vide *Lyc' Dictionarum, Saxonico-Gothico-Latinum*. Vide also Chaucer in *Troilus*, lib. 3, where *Wierdes* is used to express *fata*.

NOTE II.

Wildebrand had given orders, in one of their expeditions, to set fire to the abbey, &c.—Page 115.

The horrible excesses committed in the name of religion sully the history of this period, and are too well authenticated, and too generally known to require to be dilated on. The holy see was too remote from these climes, and its power too much in the wane, to produce any effect

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in quelling the heresy of the north. Yet the Vatican issued its thunders against its enemies, and the Nuncio Possevinus was dispatched to aid the efforts of the Pontiff's friends, and to give consolation to those who suffered from the persecutions of the heretics. There is extant a bull of the Pope (Gregory XIII) addressed on this occasion to the abbess and nuns of the ancient abbey of Wadstena, then lately re-established by the king. The following extract exhibits some of the dangers the fair sisterhood was exposed to: "*Ad Catharinam Gylta, Abbatissam*
Vat. et Sorores conventuales illas qua laudat,
 " religionem et castitatem, sub hæreticorum per-
 " secutionibus, instar rosarum inter spinas ser-
 " vantes intemeratas: et per Nuncium Posse-
 " vinum missum ipsis visitatorem, bullam iisdem
 " offert pro imminente Jubilæo, &c." — Vide Apparatus ad Historiam Sveo-Gothicam, &c. p. 221. Auctore Magno a Celse.

NOTE III.

The introduction of the religion of the church of Rome should be abandoned for ever, &c.—Page 213.

John III. had made several attempts to bring his subjects under the yoke of the Pontiff, but fortunately for his country his intolerance was

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the effect of a weak and bigoted mind; and his ignorance of the arts of persecution was exposed and lamented by Possevinus, the Pope's Nuncio. The following extract is from a Swedish historian of the first authority.—“ Ant. Possevinus (Nuncius Apost.) Stockholmiam ingressus, ut Cæsaris, non Pontificis Romani, orator magnifice suscipitur, et mox Regem Reginamque congressus, ipsos nomine Gregorii amanter compellat : quando præterea luculenter probat literatis productis, animum Regis Johannis Catholicæ studiosum religionis in Svecia propagandæ, Pontifici magnopere placere, sed *modum* propagationis saltëm displicere; ideoque suadere, ut, *remota Hypocrisi*, religionis negotio nequaquam conviciente, palam, Catholicæ fidei causam suscipere defendendam inque Svecia promovendam.”—*Messenius Scondia illustrata*, &c. T. 7. p. 50, ad ann. 1577.

THE END.

